



ATHANASIUS



MARIE E. J. HOBART



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ATHANASIUS

THE SAINT AGNES' MYSTERY PLAYS

LADY CATECHISM AND THE CHILD

THE LITTLE PILGRIMS AND THE BOOK
BELOVED

THE VISION OF SAINT AGNES' EVE

ATHANASIUS



ATHANASIUS, ARCHIDEACON OF ALEXANDRIA.

ATHANASIUS

A MYSTERY PLAY

*IN THREE ACTS AND
A PROLOGUE*

BY

MARIE E. J. HOBART

Author of the Saint Agnes Mystery Plays

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DEDICATED
TO
ROSAMOND AND CHARLES
LOVELY AND PLEASANT IN THEIR LIVES, AND
IN THEIR DEATH THEY WERE
NOT DIVIDED

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Athanasius, Archdeacon of Alexandria.
2. "A simple pageant, but instinct with life, I now will cause to pass before their eyes."
3. "I give myself to thee, O Christ, to be governed by Thy laws."
4. "And how were ye not afraid to play with the holy mysteries?"
5. "From this hour thou art my son, my consolation, and the strength of mine old age."
6. "Arius, thou hast filled up the measure of thine iniquity!"
7. "God keep thee ever in the true faith."

ATHANASIUS

;

PROLOGUE

IN THE TWILIGHT

Angel of Faith. }
Angel of Loyalty. } The Guardian Angels of the Parish.

Angel of Vision. — The Guardian Angel of Athanasius.

[*Enter from the opposite sides of the stage the Angel of Faith and the Angel of Loyalty. They advance till they meet in front of the curtain just where it is to part.*]

Angel of Loyalty. — Spirit of Faith, sweet messenger
of Him

;

Who hath ordained our service here in earth
This flock of His to succour and defend,
Where hast thou been to-day? What hast thou
done

Since at the gates of Paradise the blest
We met the glimmering dawn, and through its
rays

To earth returned and to our sev'ral tasks?

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Angel of Faith. — Hear then, thou golden-hearted
Loyalty,

The record of this latest happy day,
Happy as every day spent for our God,
To serve Whom is to reign and freely live.
When we from this earth perilous had borne
To the Good Shepherd's arms that chrisom-child,
And seen those violet eyes open to meet
His smile of welcome and of love divine,
Winged we our flight back to the earth, then I
Back to that home bereaved of all its joy.
I knelt beside the Mother sorrowful,
And held before her weeping eyes the Cross,
And when she saw its outline through her tears,
To the sword-pierced heart I whispered low:
"Remember that He said 'Thou knowst not now
This that I do, hereafter thou shalt know.'
Canst thou not trust Him since He bids thee
trust?

Wilt thou not trust Him since He died for thee?"
And then that broken heart was drawn to Him
Who draws the suffering world by His own love.
"Yea, Lord," she said, "I trust the child to
Thee;

I trust Thee with my sorrow and my hope."

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So through the day's first hours I lingered near
To hold the Cross where she must ever see,
Till grown more calm and strong she took the
Cross

Into her heart never to let it go.

Angel of Loyalty. — Now God be praised for every
human soul

That learns by Jesus' Cross to bear its own!

Angel of Faith, what didst thou next?

Angel of Faith. — I heard

Borne on the autumn breeze melodious bells

Calling our people to their Eucharist.

Thither I went to join with theirs my praise,

To help them lift their hearts unto the Lord,

To warm their cold devotions and to check

The alien thoughts blown in by Satan's breath,

A flock of robber birds to steal the seed

Lest it should fall on fertile soil and live.

The service ended, I was sent to help

A student errant who had started out

At Wisdom's high behest, but lost his way,

Confused with shifting theories, dulled with din

Of jangling voices urging him to run

Hither and yon to hear of some new thing,

And following these Athenian voices, strayed

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Into a miry path, dark with dense fog,
And slippery with old deceits and new.
Here in this vap'rous air loomed fearsome shapes
Of doubt and mocking unreality.
But should he try to escape these shadows grim,
The danger was that he might miss his step,
And plunging headlong o'er a precipice
Strike the flat stones of dead materialism.

Angel of Loyalty. — A dreary, flinty death-bed for a
soul

Made in God's image, filled with God's own
breath

To make him heir potential of God's life!
Spirit of Faith, my ready ear would learn
How thou didst win this wanderer deceived
Back to the sunlight in the Fold of Truth.

Angel of Faith. — To call back to the fold is there a
charm

As sweet and potent as the Shepherd's voice,
The well remembered voice of happier days?
Low to his inner consciousness I spoke
Full tenderly the Master's parting words:
"Let not your heart be troubled, weary one,
Believe in God, also believe in me."
At this the fog rolled back like red sea waves,

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Doubt and the other phantom disappeared.
"I know not what's befallen," cried the youth;
"One thing I know that whereas I was blind
Once more I see. I do believe in God,
And Saviour dear, also in Thee, in Thee!
I will arise, I will arise and go
Back to my Father's house. Once more my
prayers,
Too long forgotten, shall ascend to Heaven;
Once more before His altar I will kneel
To make my glad Communion, and once more
My Bible from its dusty shelf released
Shall be the first companion of each day;
So shall I follow Wisdom's high behest
In reverent fear and not in wilfulness."

Angel of Loyalty. — O true repentance! O sincere
return!

Angel of Faith. — When I had offered this sweet rue
to God

And caught afar the shout of Heaven's joy,
And answered it with mine, I came to thee,
Angel of Loyalty, to whom God gives
The high prerogative to move and mould
The mighty ones and valiant among men,
Heroes who dare, and martyrs who endure.

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O loyal one and true, I fain would learn
How thou hast served our God and succour given
To this household of faith so dear to Him,
Since through the gates of Paradise the blest
And through the pearly splendour of the dawn
We winged our flight to earth at God's command.

Angel of Loyalty. — My day was given to a little lad,
One of our flock who's lately gone from home.
I found him in the early morning hour
Still in the dormitory of his school,
The subtile Tempter whispering in his ear,
"Why kneel to pray? The other boys will smile,
Stand by the open window there and lift
Thy heart to God, and no one else will know."
Often on Memory's vivid art I call
To waken loyalty, for I have seen
Disloyalty come like base ingratitude
From that narcotic root, forgetfulness.
So when from the open window looked the child,
Nor field he saw, nor the blue distant hills,
But the interior of his parish church,
And it was Easter Even, and round the font
Were gathered catechumens among whom
Our little lad seemed to himself to stand
As once he stood on his baptismal day.

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Within the aisles and arches of the church
The shadows of Good Friday lingered still,
But near the altar stately lilies bloomed,
And in the spacious chancel myriad flowers
Waited in fragrance sweet for Easter Day.
And now a low pitched voice but clarion clear
Speaks from the font the Church's welcome
sweet,

Telling the child the sacred sign here given
Is token that forever more he lives
Christ's faithful soldier. Marked I then a thrill
Pass through the boy, and saw in his blue eyes
Kindle a light, "A soldier who's ashamed
Of his own captain or his colours true
Is not the kind of soldier I will be."

He turned, knelt by his little bed, and said
; With steadfast heart his daily morning prayer.
The baffled Tempter winced and shrank away.

Angel of Faith. — Thanks be to God for this sweet
victory,

Which in its essence pure is only part
Of the one triumph over sin and death
Wrought for the world by Christ on Easter Morn.
So is one crystal drop the miniature
And part essential of the boundless sea.

Angel of Loyalty. — Yet for a space I still my vigil kept
Close to the little victor, lest that he
Should lay his armour by and thus be found
Defenceless by the ever watchful foe.

Angel of Faith. — All Angels know the hour of victory
Hath its peculiar danger and doth call
For vigilance in those that watch.

Angel of Loyalty. — So 'twas
That I came late upon a festive scene.
Music and mirth and fragrance of sweet flowers,
And a soft radiance filled the quivering air.
A word had just been lightly spoken which
Perverting wit from its right use had cast
The shadow of a slur on holy things.
With heart perplexed the mistress of the house
Asked of her conscience, "What ought I to do?"
I breathed, "Thou art His witness among men;
Before the company of heaven one day
Thy witness He will be." With courteous mien
She said her quiet word. The air was cleared
At once, and every breast relieved, for look!
Of human nature reverence is a part,
And lack of it doth cut across the grain,
Marring the finish and the pattern fair.
And doth not one of their own poets sing

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That mockery is the fume of little hearts?
But see, my fellow guardian of the fold,
The sun hath passed his zenith long ago,
And twilight deepens. Now's the quiet hour
When weary mortals rest them from their toils,
And thoughtful ones turn from the throbbing
world

To find in reverie new light and peace.
Can we not sweet advantage take of this
Rare silence and receptive mood to bring
Within the orbit of their souls some truth,
Some vivid truth displayed with radiance
Of power and beauty irresistible,
That it may win their fealty and love
Forever more?

Angel of Faith. — Thy words awake in me
; A thought that long has slumbered in my
heart,

And as the lotus sleeping in the Nile
Awoke and floated slowly to the day,
Drawn by the charm of Joseph's loveliness,
So from the deep of my still consciousness
This thought ascends to meet thy fruitful words.

Angel of Loyalty. — Let thy white flower unfold its
petals pure.

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Angel of Faith. — Thou know'st that in the wisdom of
God's plan

For these His children of the human race
That they are linked by many subtle cords
Of mutual influence, so interwov'n
That no one lives or dies unto himself.
If one has faith the sweet contagion spreads,
If one is loyal others catch the glow,
And God ordains that man is holpen best
By one of his own nature, man by man.

Angel of Loyalty. — Have we not seen that the eternal
Word

Man to deliver every man was made?

Angel of Faith. — So pondering often have I wished
that we

To quicken faith and loyalty and zeal
In this fair garden of the Lord, might find
Some great and shining light of human faith
To hold before them till they catch the
flame.

Then would their lamps burn the night through
until

The Bridegroom comes, and they would be
immune

From the miasma that o'erhangs these days,

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The plague of doubt and wavering loyalty.

Angel of Loyalty. — I have thy purpose and with full
consent

I lend me to such fruitful work. Nay more,
I see the one among the sons of men
Who's mirrored in thy thought. 'Tis he who
stood

Alone against the world, a granite peak,
While raging waves of the sea foamed out their
shame,

And wandering stars drew in their baneful
wake

The sore amazed and groaning Bride of Christ.

Angel of Faith. — 'Tis even so. Now straightway let
us call

Upon his angel, and swift counsel take

How best we may this matter enterprise.

Hail Vision! pure in heart and therefore blest
With sight of God! We invoke thy present aid.

[*Enter the Angel of Vision.*]

Angel of Vision. — Glory to God on high!

Angels of Faith and Loyalty. — And peace on earth!

Angel of Vision. — Ye angels of the Lord, praise ye
the Lord!

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Angels of Faith and Loyalty. — We magnify His name
forever more!

[*A pause.*]

Angel of Loyalty. — Where found our voices thee, O
blessed one,

Whence art thou come with instant sweet
response?

Angel of Vision. — From the pure ether of the upper
air

And from the cloudless region of the stars,

From the vast temple of the Universe

Where floated I in contemplation free,

Adoring our Creator with each breath.

At your behest on the wings of the wind I
come.

Now tell me, ye that do excel in strength,

That hear His words and His commands obey,

How may my love the King of Glory serve?

How may my service glorify the Lord of Hosts?

Angel of Loyalty. — By ministering to His dear chil-
dren here,

For are we not sent forth to minister,

And help salvation's heirs upon their way?

Time was, O Angel of the starry eyes,

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That to thy guardian care a child was given,
Who by his faith and love through storm-swept
years

Stood out, defender of the Church's faith.

Him to our people would we now make known,

That seeing his firm faith and courage high,

They following his example may attain

To such a faith as shall o'ercome the world.

Angel of Vision. — Yours is a righteous purpose, and
I yield

My willing service to secure the end.

A simple pageant, but instinct with life,

I now will cause to pass before their eyes.

Draw back this veil; give me a space to show

My royal-hearted Athanese.¹

[The Angels of Faith and Loyalty draw back the curtain. The quays of Alexandria are seen, showing in the background the harbour, with shipping, and in the distance the Island of Pharos with the light house.]

Ye see

Before you ancient Alexandria.

Yonder's the city, sweltering in the heat

Of Egypt's burning sun. Here's the salt sea

¹ *Royal-hearted Athanese.* Newman: *Lyra Apostolica.*

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Whence wanton breezes find their languid way
To play about the quays. Just so it was
A far-off day in June. Now I will call
Young Athanese. Come hither, my sweet ward;
God hath ordained that here thou play'st
to-day.



"A SIMPLE PAGEANT, BUT INSTINCT WITH LIFE,
I NOW WILL CAUSE TO PASS BEFORE THEIR EYES."

ACT I

Time — Early in the Fourth Century. A Day in June.

Place — The quays of Alexandria.

Persons Represented

ATHANASIOUS.	}	Boys of Alexandria.
CORNELIUS.		
ISIDORE.		
SERAPION.		

ALEXANDER. — Bishop of Alexandria and Metropolitan
of all Egypt.

PAUL. — A Deacon.

[*Enter Athanasius, reading from a scroll.*]

Athanasius. — In the beginning was the Word, and
the Word was with God, and the Word was
God. (*Lifting his eyes and speaking with
dreamy thoughtfulness.*) In the beginning!
How far away! My thought cannot reach
to it nor hold it. In the beginning! Before
I was, . . . before my father was, . . .
before the sea and the stars were, . . .

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before time was! No, I cannot reach to it. When I try to understand I am beaten back like that bird which flies against the wind. (*His eyes follow the bird.*) Yet it stretches its wings and tries again, and so do I, even though I may never reach that far-away beginning. I wonder if anyone really understands what *In the beginning* means. I wonder if the Archbishop understands! How should he? He was not in the beginning. (*With deep awe.*) Only God! Only God! And the Word was God. (*Remains lost in thought.*)

[*During this time he has seated himself on a bench at the extreme right of the stage. He does not see or hear the boys when they enter, but is completely absorbed in thought. Sometimes he reads and sometimes thinks over what he has read.*]

[*Enter Cornelius, followed by Isidore and Serapion.*]

Cornelius. — Here is a quiet place where we may play.
(*Shakes a dice cup that he has in his hand.*)

How much hast thou, Isidore?

Isidore. — I have a sesterce. (*Lays it down.*)

Cornelius. — I also. (*Lays down a coin.*) And thou, Serapion?

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Serapion. — I have three asses, but . . . (*Looks at them in his hand.*)

Cornelius. — But what?

Serapion. — If I should lose them, *Cornelius*, I would go supperless to bed.

Cornelius. — And if thou didst go supperless to bed! Art thou a mewling infant? Dost thou not wish to be a man and a soldier?

Serapion (*doubtfully*). — Ye—s.

Cornelius. — Thou must learn to endure hunger; put down thy coins.

Isidore. — Thou art too hard on him, *Cornelius*. Listen, *Serapion*: If thou dost lose I will share my supper with thee, and so we will neither of us be very full nor very empty.

Serapion. — Then I will put down my coins. (*He does so.*) I can endure to be a little hungry.

Cornelius. — I throw first because I am the oldest.

Isidore. — But thou art not the oldest.

Cornelius. — Then I throw first because I am a Roman.

Isidore. — Ah! that is a good reason.

[*Cornelius* throws, and just as he does so, he looks up and sees *Athanasius*.]

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Cornelius. — Look! is not that Athanasius? (*Calls.*)
Athanasius!

[*Athanasius does not hear.*]

Isidore. — Athanasius!

[*Still Athanasius does not hear.*]

Cornelius, Isidore and Serapion in unison. — A-tha-
na-sius!

[*Athanasius starts and rolls up his scroll.*]

Athanasius. — Did anyone call?

Isidore. — Thou dreamer!

Cornelius (mocking). — “Did anyone call?” We all
three called.

[*Athanasius comes toward them smiling.*]

Athanasius. — Well, then, what is it?

Cornelius. — Wilt thou play with us?

Athanasius. — Aye, verily, so that ye play what pleases
me.

Cornelius. — We are dicing. Hast thou a sesterce?

Athanasius. — I will not play dice.

Cornelius. — And why not?

Athanasius. — Because it is not a good pastime.

Isidore. — Thou art mad, Athanasius, everyone in
Alexandria plays dice.

Athanasius. — That does not make it right.

Isidore. — How now, wilt thou set thyself above thy

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native city, above our great and beautiful Alexandria?

Athanasius. — I have said my say, Isidore, I will not play.

Cornelius. — But why?

Athanasius. — I have already told thee: because it is not a good game; thou knowest it leads to waste of time and squandering of money, and to many brawls and even crimes.

Cornelius. — Listen, Athanasius, thou dost not understand. (*Impressively.*) They play dice in Rome! I know whereof I speak. Everyone plays, the nobles, the ladies, above all, the soldiers, — I have often seen them play in the Palace gardens when I was with my father. Nay, Cæsar himself doth often play in his tent to while away the tedium of his inactive hours.

Athanasius. — Still, that does not make it *right*, Cornelius.

[*The boys laugh.*]

Isidore. — So then, neither our great Alexandria, nor even Rome, nor even the Emperour himself can make a thing right when Athanasius says that it is wrong. Silly boy, at this

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rate thou wilt one day find thyself against the whole world.

Cornelius. — Athanasius against the world!

Serapion. — Yes, Athanasius against the world!

Isidore. — How wouldst thou like that?

Athanasius (to himself). — But if the world were wrong and I wished to do right, I could not help myself. I would have to be against it.

Cornelius. — Come, answer, what wouldst thou do alone against the world, thou little Athanasius?

Vision (who has drawn near, speaking behind Athanasius to his inner consciousness, but remaining invisible). — Lift up thine eyes, Athanasius, and consider. If the world were against thee, and thou wert in the right, wouldst thou be alone?

Athanasius (to himself). — I see, I see. If I were in the right, God himself would always be with me. (*To the boys.*) Against the world Athanasius could do nothing, but against the world Athanasius and God could do everything.

[*The boys look at each other perplexed.*]

Isidore. — Clearly he is mad. Let us leave him and

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go to our own game, since he will not play with us.

Athanasius (in a conciliatory tone). — But, Isidore, I said not that I would not play with you: I only said that I would not play dice. Surely there are other things that we can find to do.

Serapion. — We might go a-fishing.

Isidore (gloomily). — No, the sun is too bright, we should catch nothing.

Serapion. — We might go down to the beach and watch the Corn Ships sail.

Cornelius. — They will not sail to-day. The omens were not good.

Athanasius. — I know something beautiful that we could play.

Serapion. — What is it?

Athanasius (eagerly). — I have played it before, and 'tis very interesting, and also it teaches us many good things.

Cornelius. — But say what it is.

Athanasius. — Let us play church.

Isidore. — How do we play?

Athanasius. — There are many ways to play and all are good, but to-day we will have a baptism.

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I will be the Bishop and ye shall be catechumens.

Cornelius. — What are catechumens?

Isidore. — Dost thou not know? They are people who are ready to forsake their pagan worship and desire to learn about the Church. I myself am a catechumen. I am in preparation for Holy Baptism.

Athanasius. — So much the better, I know all the rest, what questions to ask, and what ye should answer and what I must do, for I have so often watched the holy rite.

Cornelius. — Well, this is very new, and takes my fancy. Lead on, Athanasius, we will play church.

Athanasius. — Then come with me, and we will prepare what we need.

[Exeunt all the boys.]

Enter from the opposite side of the stage Alexander and Paul, his deacon.]

Alexander. — Here are those cooling breezes to find which the heat of my study hath driven me to the quays.

Vision (in the background and invisible to Alexander and Paul). — Ah, Alexander! 'Tis the will

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of God hath driven thee to the quays.
Thou art to find more to-day than refresh-
ing winds.

Paul (indicating the bench). — Will your Sanctity sit
here and rest?

Alexander. — Yes, my good Paul. Now let us finish
our business.

Paul (looks through some papers and takes out one). —
There is the affair of Meletius.

Alexander (sighing). — Yes, there is always Meletius
to be a thorn in the flesh. The schism
grows not at present, but neither is there
prospect of its healing. Let it be for to-day.

Paul (looking over his papers). — There is the Widows'
Dole.

Alexander. — The gold was sent from the Prefecture
this morning, was it not?

Paul. — Yes, and it is now in thy strong box.

Alexander. — Cause the notice of the Emperour's dole
to be read in all the Churches. This day
week I will distribute it at the Patriarcheion
as I return from church. What next?

Paul. — Thou didst ask for a report of last Sunday's
sermon of Arius, the Rector of Baukalis.
I have it here.

Alexander (stretching out his hand). — Leave it with me.

Which of my secretaries took these notes?

Paul. — Demas made the report, but I was with him.

Alexander. — How wast thou impressed by Arius?

Paul. — Why truly, my lord, I think he is most eloquent. His voice is very musical and his bearing dignified, though somewhat sad.

Alexander. — Is he greatly admired by the people?

Paul. — It would seem so. The church was crowded to the doors, and I heard murmurs of praise on all sides, especially from the women.

Alexander (shaking his head). — I like him not. He comes from Libya,¹ a country fruitful in monstrous and unnatural productions. My heart tells me that we shall have trouble with him. . . . Is there any thing else?

Paul. — No, my lord, I have the notes of the letters I am to write for thee, and I will have them ready for thee to sign in the morning.

Alexander. — One thing more I have for thee to do. Take these alms (*giving him a purse*) to Alypius. It is to bury a poor man in his

¹“Libya, a country fruitful in monstrous and unnatural productions.” — Cave.

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parish; he was speaking to me about it this morning.

Paul. — Shall I return here for thee?

Alexander. — No, it is not necessary; when it is cooler I will find my own way home. Fare thee well.

[*Exit Paul, after kissing the hand of his Bishop.*]

Alexander (looking at the report in his hand). — This wily Presbyter of Baukalis fills me with forebodings. He is not outspoken enough to lay hold of, and yet in his long sojourn in Antioch he hath taken some taint through Lucian and his followers, if indeed he hath not drunk up the dregs of the impiety of Paulus of Samosata and of Ebion.¹ Let me see what is his latest utterance.

[*Alexander begins to read, and becomes absorbed in the MS.*]

Enter Athanasius, Cornelius, Isidore and Serapion.]

Athanasius. — Now, as I told you, this place (*indicating the space immediately around them*) doth represent the ante-room of the baptistery where ye must renounce Satan and make your covenant with Christ. After which

¹ See Du Bose: *Ec. Coun.*, pp. 59, 91.

I will take you severally by the hand and lead you down into the water, that ye may be buried unto sin and rise again unto righteousness. Now fold your hands meekly upon your breast (*they do so*), and hear the mystical words, and make answer to them after me, for though ye do not perfectly understand them, yet it is better so than that ye should die unsealed and unsanctified.¹

[The Angel of Vision during this time has drawn near to Alexander. She stands behind him, and now touches him on the shoulder and points to the children.]

Alexander. — What have we here? They seem to enact some ceremony.

Athanasius. — Now turn to the West, for the West is the place of darkness and Satan is darkness and his strength is in darkness.

[The children turn.]

Alexander (starts). — A baptism!

Athanasius. — Now stretch out your hands against him and say: I renounce thee, Satan, and thy pomps and thy vices and thine inven-

¹ For the ancient form of administering baptism, see Bingham's *Antiq.*, Vol. IV.



"I GIVE MYSELF TO THEE, O CHRIST, TO BE GOVERNED BY THY LAWS."

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tions, and thy world which lieth in iniquity.

The Boys. — I renounce thee, Satan, and thy pomps and thy vices and thine inventions and thy world which lieth in iniquity.

Athanasius. — Well said. Now turn about to the East, for he that renounces the Devil turns to Christ, Who is the Sun of Righteousness and the Fountain of Light, and make your covenant with Him in these words (*he stretches out his hands towards heaven*): I give myself to Thee, O Christ, to be governed by Thy laws.

The Boys (imitating his gesture). — I give myself to Thee, O Christ, to be governed by Thy laws.

Athanasius. — Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?

Alexander (to himself). — He hath it all.

The Boys. — I believe.

Athanasius. — Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord, and in His Cross?

The Boys. — I believe.

Athanasius. — Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost?

Alexander. — Hold there!

[*The boys start and look at him.*]

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Athanasius. — It is the Pope.

Alexander. — Come hither.

[*The boys come to him promptly, dropping on one knee to salute him.*]

Alexander. — What were ye doing?

Athanasius. — We were playing at having a baptism.

Alexander (sternly). — And how were ye not afraid to play with the Holy Mysteries?

[*The boys look at each other in consternation. Athanasius steps forward and places himself in front of the others.*]

Athanasius. — I perceive that we have grievously offended, but indeed, your Holiness, the fault is altogether mine, for I invented the play and persuaded the others thereto.

Alexander (to the others). — Is this so?

Isidore (hesitating). — Ye—s, my lord Archbishop.

Alexander. — Then are ye all dismissed. Leave this boy to me.

Cornelius (makes a very low reverence). — I crave pardon of your Dignity, but we cannot desert our comrade. It is true he proposed the game, but we all agreed to it, and we must all bear the consequences.

Alexander. — Come nearer to me and listen. Last



"AND HOW WERE YE NOT AFRAID TO PLAY WITH THE HOLY MYSTERIES?"

week I was traveling in the Mareotis, and by the roadside there was a pit into which a lamb had fallen. While I was casting about in my mind how I should succour the bruised and frightened little creature, I saw the shepherd drawing near. Now, what think ye that I did?

Isidore. — Thou didst leave the lamb to the shepherd's care, I trow.

Alexander. — Even so. Now I am Shepherd here in Alexandria, leave therefore to me this lamb of mine, and do not fear for him.

[The boys make their reverence to Alexander, bowing and kissing his hand; he makes over them each the sign of the Cross.]

Exeunt the boys.

A pause during which Alexander looks at Athanasius, who stands before him with downcast eyes.]

Alexander. — What led thee to play with this most holy rite?

Athanasius. — I hardly know, your Holiness. The things of the Church are so beautiful that I scarce can think or speak or even dream of anything else. I did not think that I could do them any irreverence, for I love them so.

Alexander. — Hast thou ever enacted a baptism before, my child?

Athanasius. — Yes, my Father, once before.

Alexander. — Then make to me now a full confession of the matter; search thy memory carefully and omit nothing.

Athanasius (*speaking carefully and deliberately*). — It was a week ago, on the feast of Peter the Martyr. I was on the beach not far from thy palace, with three of my companions, Ammonius, Pammon and Philip. I enacted with them the rite of baptism, but not being let or hindered, I finished the ceremony.

Alexander. — Didst thou baptize these boys?

Athanasius. — Yes, your Holiness.

Alexander. — How didst thou do it?

Athanasius. — I led them into the sea, and buried them three times in the water, saying, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Alexander. — My son, I perceive that thou hast done this in the innocency of thine heart. Nevertheless, through ignorance thou hast done wrong. These are great mysteries which

as yet thou dost not understand. Thou art forbidden ever to play in such manner again. Moreover, thou must without delay find these boys whom thou didst baptize, and bring them to me for instruction and pastoral care. And also thou shalt bring to me the boys with whom thou wast playing to-day. I will have them all enrolled with the catechumens to be taught and trained.

Athanasius. — I will obey thee from my very heart in this and in all things.

[Alexander stretches out his hand to Athanasius, who takes it and kisses it, then kneels to receive the Bishop's blessing.]

Alexander. — Now tell me thy name.

Athanasius. — I am called Athanasius.

Alexander. — And thy parentage.

Athanasius. — My parents were confessors in the persecution of Maximian. Now they are both dead, and their sepulchre lieth just outside of the City.

Alexander. — Give unto them eternal rest, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them!

Athanasius (softly). — Amen.

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Alexander. — What is now thy manner of life?

Athanasius. — I dwell with my aunt near the Church of St. Theonas, and I attend the school of one Dioscorus.

Alexander. — I do not remember to have heard of that school.

Athanasius. — Dioscorus hath a lodging not far from the Temple of Serapis, but he is very old, and sometimes as we recite our lessons he falls asleep. It is the best that my aunt can pay for.

Alexander. — What studies hast thou pursued?

Athanasius. — I know somewhat of grammar and rhetoric, and have read much of Homer and a little of Plato.

Alexander. — And where hast thou learned the Faith since thy parents died?

Athanasius. — Sometimes I talk with confessors and others who resort to the house of my aunt, and I ask them questions, but chiefly have I learned in church from the reading of the Scriptures, and from sermons, and from all the beautiful things that I see and hear. I heard thee preach on Whitsunday, my lord Archbishop, and other times besides

ATHANASIUS

Alexander. — Dost thou spend much time in church?

Athanasius. — Yes, my Father, I am there when the doors are opened until all is in order for the day. After school I am there again, for thou must know that I help the Custodian of the Sacred Vessels and of the Rolls. He hath been lame in the leg since the last rising of the Nile when he was hurt with a boat-hook.

Alexander. — Art thou not paid for this service?

Athanasius. — Oh yes, not in money, but in this wise
(drawing from his bosom his roll, and showing it to Alexander, who takes it from him).

Alexander. — Why, thou hast here part of the Evangel of St. John!

Athanasius. — Yes, my lord, the parchment came to me with my father's books, and the Custodian of the Rolls doth each week transcribe for me twice seven lines, two lines for my work each day.

Alexander. — Let me hear thee read. (*Hands him the roll.*)

Athanasius. — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

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All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

Alexander. — That will do. Dost thou understand what thou hast read?

Athanasius. — Only in part, for it is so high above me. I was wondering anon, my lord, if thou canst reach to it.

Alexander. — My child, if God were such that my little mind could understand His nature, He would not be God, and I could not worship Him. But ever as we grow, we understand more and more of God, and in Him we have space to grow infinitely, forever and forever.

Athanasius (eagerly). — Oh, I understand. For sometimes as I read, these words seem like the great dome of heaven, and I fly in it like a bird, upward and upward, and yet always beyond me I see the far-reaching blue and the blinding glory of the sun. Still it is a joy to fly toward the sun, and it is a joy to read this Evangel, for I am filled with such sweetness and praise, and with such a great passion of love for the Word Who was God, and yet was made flesh and dwelt among us!

Alexander. — Dost thou indeed so greatly love the Saviour of the World, Athanasius?

Athanasius. — Beyond all words I love Him. I wish that like the martyrs I could seal my love and die for Him.

Alexander. — Art thou also willing to live for Him, Athanasius?

Athanasius. — Oh, if I but knew how! I would do His will as long as there was a breath left in me.

Alexander (to himself in reverie). — This pure stream of faith and love should not be left to chance guidance.

Vision (who has drawn near, and now speaks behind him, invisible to Alexander and Athanasius). — Lift up thine eyes, Alexander, and look into the future. Couldst thou do better for the Church of Jesus Christ than to train this child for service therein?

Alexander (dreamily). — Yes, the days are coming . . . I see on the horizon the dust of their approach . . . when this clear mind and brave spirit will be needed in the Church. *(After a pause, to Athanasius)* My child, I trow that the Custodian of the Sacred

Vessels and of the Parchments at St. Theonas must find someone else to help him.

Athanasius (startled). — Yes, my Father?

Alexander. — Thy Bishop hath need of thee.

Athanasius. — Thou ! Of me!

Alexander (drawing Athanasius to him). — Yes, Athanasius, I have need of thee to be my deacon and my secretary, my eyes and ears, my mouth and my right hand. Wilt thou be such a deacon as this?

Athanasius (anxiously). — How can I when I am so young and ignorant?

Alexander. — Ah! thou must be taught and trained. Hereafter thou shalt live in my house, and gaze on the bright countenance of truth in the mild and dewy air of delightful studies.¹ My own books shall be open to thee. My friends shall be thine. Thou shalt attend the lectures of our great masters of rhetoric and philosophy, and the library of Alexandria shall yield up to thee its treasures. And all the while thou and I will grow

¹ "Gaze on the bright countenance of truth in the mild and dewy air of delightful studies." — Greg. Naz.

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together in the knowledge of God, studying to do His will. So that as yonder tower on Pharos looks out over the harbour, and holds its faithful light for all to see, we may look out over the Church in Egypt, vigilant to watch, and faithful through night and storm to hold the truth about Him Whose life is the only light of this dark world. What sayst thou, Athanasius?

Athanasius. — What can I say? I have no words. It is too wonderful and beautiful. My Father, I will go with thee, and whatsoever thou sayst unto me, I will do it.

Alexander. — Come then, home with me. (*Rises.*) This evening I will send a message to thine aunt. From this hour thou art my son, my consolation, and the strength of mine old age.

[*They start for home, slowly crossing the stage.*

Enter on tip-toe and with great caution, Cornelius, Isidore and Serapion.]

Cornelius. — Hist! Athanasius.

[*Athanasius turns and sees them.*]

Athanasius. — My Father, suffer me to speak to these my comrades.

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[*Alexander indicates by a motion that he gives
permission.*]

Athanasius. — What is it?

Cornelius. — We would know how he hath punished thee.

Athanasius. — In this way: He hath adopted me for his son, and to-night I sleep at the Patriarcheion.

[*Curtain.*]



"FROM THIS HOUR THOU ART MY SON, MY CONSOLATION AND
THE STRENGTH OF MINE OLD AGE."

ACT II

Time — A day in June in the Year of Grace 325.

Place — A Basilica in the city of Nicæa.

Persons Represented

CONSTANTINE. — Roman Emperour.

ALEXANDER. { Bishop of Alexandria and Metropolitan of
All Egypt, commonly called "The Pope."

ATHANASIUUS. — His Archdeacon.

HOSIUS. — Bishop of Cordova, President of the Council.

EUSEBIUS. — Bishop of Cæsarea and Metropolitan of
Palestine.

EUSTATHIUS. — Bishop of Antioch.

JOHN. — Catholicos of the Church of the Farther East.

POTAMMON. — Bishop of Heraclopolis, Confessor.

PAPHNUTIUS. — Bishop of the Upper Thebaid, Con-
fessor.

PAUL. — Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, Confessor.

JAMES. — Bishop of Nisibis, a Hermit.

SPYRIDION. — Bishop of Cyprus, a Shepherd.

MARCELLUS. — Bishop of Ancyra.

VICTOR. { Presbyters, representing Sylvester,
VINCENTIUS. { Bishop of Rome.

ATHANASIUS

THEOPHILUS. — A Gothic Bishop.

ACESIUS. — A Novatian Ascetic.

ARIUS. — The Heresiarch, a Presbyter of Alexandria.

THEONAS. — Bishop of Marmarica,	} Avowed Friends and Supporters of Arius.
SECUNDUS. — Bishop of Ptolomais,	

EUSEBIUS. — Bishop of Nicomedia,	} Sympathizers with Arius.
THEOGNIS. — Bishop of Nicæa,	
MARIS. — Bishop of Chalcedon,	

HERMOGENES. — A Secretary.

PAGES.

VISION.

NOTE. — This being an historical play, the words of the writers and actors of the period have been freely incorporated into the text, and it has not been thought necessary to indicate where this has been done, except when the words of one person have been put into the mouth of another, and not always then. Nor has it been deemed necessary to indicate passages or expressions taken from the Scriptures or from the Prayer Book or the “Quicunque vult.” The intention has been to acknowledge all quotations from modern authors, and if in any case this has been omitted, it has been through inadvertence. In the speeches of Eusebius of Cæsarea, the phrase “Remember that we are seeking light, not heat” is borrowed from Tennyson, and “The towering eagles resigned the flags unto the Cross” from Pearson.

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[At the back of the stage an altar. On the dorsal the text "Whom say ye that I am?" Right and left seats ranged against the walls for the Bishops. In the centre a "throne" on which rests a copy of the Four Gospels. Back of the throne a small gold chair. A seat to the right of the gold chair and one to the left. Hanging on the wall to the left a banner inscribed "Lo, I am with you always!" To the right another banner bearing the device of a dove with outstretched wings, and the legend "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you."¹]

[Enter before the curtain the Angel of Vision.]

The Angel of Vision. — "And the Child grew, waxed strong in spirit, filled
 With Wisdom, and upon Him grace divine."
 Even so on the fair pattern of his Lord,
 In strength and wisdom Athanasius grew,
 ; Winning the favour both of God and man.
 Thus passed the quiet, studious years of youth,
 The seed time of the fruitful life to come.

¹ The seats for the Bishops should be arranged in somewhat of a semi-circle, to look like an apse. The "throne" for the Gospels should be without a back, and the Emperour's "small gold chair" raised somewhat above it. It seems unavoidable that the Emperour should have his back to the altar.

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And then upon the Alexandrian Church
Crept in a sore disease. With vision keen,
And courage high, young Athanasius faced
The burning madness of the Arian plague,
And side by side with Alexander strove
To stay it there in Alexandria.
'Twere easier far to hush the moaning sea
Presaging storm, or still the wilful wind
Than Arius to silence when he bent
Himself against the Deity of Christ.¹
Slave to hard pride, he thought himself the
free,
And loved to choose his path, lawless and weak,
He charmed the ears that would not hear the
truth,
And led the blind, himself more blind than they;
For silly sheep followed the hireling,
Their own true shepherds calling them in vain.
And thus the madness spread. But now at last
In God's full time the Church has met to hear
The question and to answer it, "Whom say
Ye that I am?" Draw back once more the
veil.

¹The Arians "bending themselves against the Deity of Christ." — Hooker: Eccl. Pol.

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[*The curtain is drawn, showing the interior
of the Basilica.*]

Put off your shoes, for this is holy ground!
Here in this old basilica was won
Nicæa's victory. The chestnuts wave
On Bithnia's wooded slopes, and fleecy clouds
Float in the summer sky and in the blue
Of the Ascanian Lake, while far away
Snow capped Olympus broods upon the scene.
Here in Nicæa, City of Victory,
Have gathered day by day for many weeks
The servants of the Church of Jesus Christ.
From far and wide, each from his diocese,
By lumbering caravan or heaving ship,
Through sandy tracks, by stony mountain
paths,
O'er the salt sea, over the smooth post roads,
At Constantine's command the Church has
come
To witness to the Faith. They gladly meet
Under the grateful shade of porticoes,
And in the hostelrys and streets they see
Each other face to face, martyrs of Christ,
Confessors, hermits, scholars, saints and men
Devout, out of all nations under heaven,

ATHANASIUS

Waiting for that great day which now has come.
Veni, Veni, Creator Spiritus! ¹

[*Vision withdraws. Enter Alexander attended by Athanasius, Paphnutius and Potammon.*]

Alexander (looking about). — No one is here. We are the first to arrive.

Athanasius. — Yes, we are full early, and that is right, for who should be the first at this Council, but thou, my Father, who hast so long borne alone the brunt of the fight?

Alexander. — Ah! I should ill have borne it, and made little headway without thee, my son.

Athanasius. — I am but a part of thee, and what I do is only fruit of thine own sowing, but in such as these, Confessors of Christ (*pointing to Paphnutius and Potammon*), is the Church's true strength. Be ye seated, beloved ones.

[*Alexander seats himself. Paphnutius and Potammon on either side of him. They converse. Enter Spyridion. He is dressed like a shepherd and carries a staff. He looks about him rather shyly. Athanasius goes forward to meet him.*]

Athanasius. — I give thee joy, Spyridion, on thy recent

¹ For description of Nicæa, and of the gathering of the Council, see Stanley: Eastern Church.

convert. May he shine like a jewel in thy crown on that glad day when thou shalt lay it at thy Saviour's feet! Thou didst lead the heathen philosopher to baptism at once, I was told?

Spyridion. — Yes, I lost not a moment in taking him to the Fountain of Life, but it was not my poor, untutored words that melted his heart, but the fire of the Holy Ghost, for when I had finished speaking and said to him, "Believest thou?" for all his great swelling words, he acknowledged that he felt within him an impulse which forced him to confess the faith of Christ. But, good my lord, I would fain speak to thee of a matter that troubles me.

Athanasius. — Call me not lord, I am only a deacon of Alexandria. I am the servant of the Bishop of Cyprus, or, if he will have it so, his son.

Spyridion. — My son, thou hast lived in the great world, and studied in the famous schools of Alexandria, but I have come here at the Emperour's bidding from my sheep-cotes, and from following the ewes great with young. I fear by my want of learning to

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bring dishonour on the name of Christ. I worship Him as God, and love Him as my Saviour, but I cannot reason about it with wise eloquence and subtlety.

Athanasius. — My Father, what the Church calls for to-day is thy testimony. Thou art asked to witness to the Faith, not to explain the wherefore and the how of divine mysteries. Thou hast only to declare what was the Faith once for all delivered to Cyprus what time the Holy Ghost said "Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Spyridion. — Ah, that is an easy matter, we have abundant records. Thou hast taken a load from my mind. Now I would greet the Pope.

[*Athanasius leads him to Alexander.*]

Athanasius. — My Father, here is the Bishop of Cyprus.

[*Enter Victor and Vincentius. They pause a moment at the back of the stage.*]

Alexander (to Spyridion, rising). — Peace be with thee, my brother.

Spyridion. — And with thy spirit, most sweet and honoured brother and bishop.

ATHANASIUS

[*Victor and Vincentius advance and approach
Athanasius.*]

Victor. — Art thou not the Archdeacon of Alexandria?

Athanasius. — I am he, and a servant of the servants
of Jesus Christ.

Vincentius. — We would fain be presented to the Pope
of Alexandria, for we bear to him the greet-
ings of his brother, the Bishop of Rome.

[*Athanasius leads them to Alexander.*]

Athanasius. — My lord and Father, these are the
delegates of the Bishop of Rome.

[*Alexander gives them his hand, which they kiss,
bowing the knee.*]

Alexander. — Peace be with you, and with him whom
ye represent.

Victor. — Sylvester, Bishop of Rome, greets thee, O
Pope of Alexandria, with all brotherly love
; and Christian humility.

Alexander. — How is my dear brother?

Vincentius. — His great age and his many infirmities
could not have borne the rigours of this
long journey, but his heart is with us, and
with us he prays for the peace of Jerusalem.

Alexander. — Bear him my brotherly and most loving
greetings, and let him know how truly we

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wish that in God's good providence the Bishop of the Imperial City might have sat with his brother bishops in this great Council.

[Victor and Vincentius pass to their seats. Enter Eusebius of Nicomedia, with Arius, Theognis, Maris, Theonas and Secundus. Eusebius salutes the Alexandrian clergy coldly and takes his place. Theognis and Maris on his right and left. Theonas and Secundus remain for the present standing in the background. Arius advances, bows haughtily to Alexander, and then stands looking at Athanasius with studied insolence.]

Arius. — Why camest thou hither, and with whom hast thou left thy proper duties in Alexandria? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thy heart. Thou art come that thou mightest essay thy logic on me, as thou hast done before. But have a care, thou hast not the ear of the Church as thou hast that of the aged Alexander, and thou shalt not have it all thine own way to-day.

Athanasius. — I seek not mine own way, Arius, but the truth as God hath revealed it to the Church. Seek thou it too, and perchance

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we may one day meet as ships that sail
for the same port.¹

[Athanasius turns from Arius, and seats himself at the feet of Alexander. Arius seats himself near Eusebius of Nicomedia. Theonas and Secundus seat themselves right and left of Arius.]

Enter Eusebius of Cæsarea, Eustathius, John, James, Paul, Acesius, and Marcellus of Ancyra. They all seat themselves, Eusebius sitting at the left of the Emperour's golden chair. Just as Marcellus has taken his seat, he sees Arius and springs up, shaking his fist at him.]

Marcellus. — Ah! thou perverse one! Thou forerunner of Antichrist!

Athanasius (lays his hand on the arm of *Marcellus*). — Softly, *Marcellus*, as much as in us lieth, shall we not be gentle to those that oppose themselves?

Marcellus. — Gentleness is wasted on such perversity.

Athanasius. — And wilt thou, dear friend, accept one word of caution? In thy fierceness against this heresy of Arius, be careful that thou dost not lose thy balance, and fall into Sabellianism, confounding the Persons of

¹ Compare "Qua Cursum Ventus," A. H. Clough.

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the Ever Blessed Trinity. In self-control and temperance lies our strength.

Marcellus. — Have no fear of me.

Athanasius (aside). — I have great fear of thee, thou good, clumsy Marcellus.

[*Enter Hosius, attended by Theophilus.*]

Alexander (rising). — Peace be with thee, Hosius, thou great Bishop of the West. Holy art thou in name, and holy in character. In the name of the Eastern Church, I welcome in thee the Church of the West.

Hosius. — I bring to the Eastern Church the greetings of the West, and pray God that we may ever be one in truth and mutual love. Reverend Fathers, the Emperour hath decreed that I shall preside at the Council, but, forasmuch as my knowledge of your Grecian tongue is so imperfect, I have asked the Bishop of Cæsarea to pronounce our greeting to the Emperour.

[*Hosius seats himself at the right of the golden chair. Theophilus among the other Bishops.*

Enter a page with a flaming torch.]

The Page. — The Emperour comes! Make ready to receive the Emperour!

[*All rise.*

Flourish of trumpets, then a stately march, and the Emperour comes in, attended by four pages, one of whom bears the Labarum. The procession passes around the Basilica, until the Emperour has made the circuit of the stage; he then takes his place in front of the golden chair, but remains standing.]

Hosius. — Will not our August Emperour be seated?

[*The Emperour seats himself. All the Nicene Fathers resume their seats except Eusebius of Cæsarea. When all is quiet, he speaks.*]

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Friends and priests of God, ye who are clad in the sacred tunic and wear the crown of glorious service, long since we have heard in the lessons of Holy Scripture the wonders of God's hand and His goodness towards men. ~~In our hymns~~ ; ~~and canticles we have been accustomed to~~ sing these words, "O God, we have heard with our ears the wonders which thou hast done in times of old." Yea, verily, but to-day it is no longer by hearing, no longer by word and report that we know the mighty hand and stretched-out arm of our omnipotent God and King. We ourselves

behold, with our own eyes we see, marvels
 of power and goodness like to those of
 which we have read. How wonderful has
 been the change in our condition since at
 the conversion of Constantine ~~the towering~~
~~eagles resigned the flags unto the Cross!~~
 Not only are we delivered from the rack
 and torment of persecution, but now is
 Christ confessed and worshipped through-
 out the Empire. (*Turning to Constantine*)
 Great and manifold were the blessings,
 most dread Sovereign,¹ bestowed upon us
 by God through thee. ~~What king ever~~
~~ordained laws so pious and wise?~~ Who has
 ever abrogated the fierce and barbarous
 customs of savage nations by such mild
 and beneficial laws? Who else has given
 to his soldiers arms of piety harder than
 adamant against their enemies? Still ring-
 ing in our ears are the pæans of congratu-
 lation for the victory of Chrysopolis and
 amid the festal joys of all thy subjects shall

¹ Preface to the A. V. The Fathers have been accused of ful-
 someness in their mode of addressing the Emperours, but it would
 seem that court language is always about the same and that it
 is rated at its true value.

we alone be dumb? Nay, illustrious Victor, we too hold in joyful remembrance thy victory over the dissolute and impious Licinius. As many of us look upon thy face for the first time we can hear the battle cry of Constantine, "God and our Saviour!" We can see the images of the false gods of Licinius fall to the ground like Dagon, while his pagan troops fly in terror and confusion, and, thinking of all these things, we return thanks to God for thee, for thy conversion and most Christian rule, for thy victory over all our foes; and for this, the latest in time but the noblest of all thy noble deeds, we give thanks to God that he put into thy heart the sublime determination to summon in this Council the Bishops of the habitable earth to oppose to the invisible enemy of the Church the battalions of a divine phalanx.

Constantine. — Ye white-robed Fathers, I greet you ~~fair~~ and bid you welcome with all love. If after years remember the name of Constantine, let them record that twice in his

life he had a happy day. Once at ~~the~~
~~Milvian Bridge~~ . *his conversion*
Nicene Fathers. — Hail Constantine, Victor by the
Cross of Christ!

Constantine. — . . . and once again in Nicæa, when
still in that same sign by which alone we
conquer, the victory of peace and unity
was won. For where should we find peace
and unity if not in the Church of Christ
Who is the Prince of Peace and Who prayed
that His followers might be one, even as
He and His Father are one?

But have I found it so since at the command
of Christ I turned from the darkness of
paganism and came into the Church?
Alas! Alas! I have not found harmony,
but discord; not unity, but variance; not
brotherly love, but bitterness and recrimi-
nation. My brethren, these things ought
not so to be. (*He takes from his bosom a*
package of sealed letters tied together.) What
are these? They are letters from Christian
Bishops bringing accusation against each
other, dragging each other's faults and fail-
ings into the light. I have not read them,

knowing too well their unlovely character. I have not even broken the seals. Shall we not leave each other's shortcomings to the merciful judgment of God? Shall we not to-day let these letters perish, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs when she is shaken of a mighty wind? (*To one of his pages*) Bring me a brazier. (*The page brings a burning brazier, the Emperour lays the letters in the flame.*) So perish all unkindness out of Zion. So let the fires of love consume all bitterness and rancour, leaving us at unity, in peace. But, my Reverend Father, in God, (*pointing to Hosius*), ~~this world-renowned Spaniard hath shown me in our frequent conversation about this question which is before the Church to-day that unity and~~ peace can be found only in the true faith of Jesus Christ. I did not always understand this being but a catechumen and a soldier, for, since God hath given me the kingdom of this world, I thought that I could command the Church to be at unity, and so when the news from Alexandria reached my ears, I wrote to Alexander and Arius bidding

them leave these subtle questions which they should never have raised, and restore to me my peaceful days and tranquil nights. But having been shown that the subjects in dispute are not trivial, as I supposed, and that they did not arise from the disputatious cavils of unemployed leisure, but that in truth the matter is of deep moment, and vital to the interests of the Church, I have called this Council, and God it was on whose suggestion I acted in summoning the Bishops to meet in such numbers, that ye may declare and make known what is the truth which hath been committed to your keeping, ~~that so the belief of all nations may be unified with regard to the Divinity into one consistent form, and that the grievous sickness of this naughty world may be healed.~~
 Beloved, I take it as a happy omen that we are met in a city whose name means Victory, and I give you joy, all ye who contend for the truth, for ye are fighting on the winning side (*he takes the Labarum from the hand of his page and holds it up*), and in this sign ye shall conquer.

Hosius. — My brethren and fellow servants of Jesus Christ, by the grace of God and the piety of the Emperour this great and holy synod hath come together to declare what is and hath ever been the Catholic Faith with respect to the godhead of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Saviour of the world. And it is the wish and command of the Emperour that we shall clearly and beyond all doubt express this truth in language whose meaning can in no wise be misunderstood.

We have therefore to consider whether the Catholic Faith is that the Godhead of the Father and of the Son is one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal, or whether, as this new learning put forth by Arius and his followers doth teach, the Father is God, and the Son is a creature, highest indeed of all created beings, but still a creature.

Alexander. — Forasmuch as we find in all the apostolic Churches creeds which are the same in substance, though more or less full in their summary of the faith, were it not well to seek in these a basis for our deliberations?

For so shall we see plainly and without all doubt what hath ever been the faith of the Churches, and we have only to safeguard the language of these creeds or forms of sound words by declaring and explaining what is the true meaning as it has been understood from the days of the Apostles until now.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — The Metropolitan of Egypt hath spoken wisely, and inasmuch as the Church of Cæsarea holdeth its form of words from apostolic days, we present to you our profession of faith which we have received from the Bishops who preceded us, which we learned being subjects of the baptismal vow, and which we have ever taught both as Presbyter and Bishop, and it is this:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ (*from now on Alexander and Athanasius look intently at Arius*), The Word of God, God of God, Light of Light. [*During this sentence Arius and Eusebius of*

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Nicomedia exchange glances, making signs to each other that they will accept this article as they choose to interpret it.]

Arius (aside). — Yes, yes.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — The only begotten Son.

Arius (aside). — Yes, begotten, but before he was begotten, he was not.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — The first born of every creature.

Arius (aside). — Excellent, of every creature he is indeed the first born.

Athanasius (aside to Alexander). — This Symbol will never hold them. See how they accept each clause with nods and winks which plainly say “We can get around that.”

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Begotten of the Father before all ages.

Arius (aside). — Before all time, time itself being only a creature.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — By whom all things were made.

Arius (aside). — Aye, aye, we will admit that God created through his Word.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Who for our salvation was made flesh and lived among men, and suffered and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and shall come again in

glory to judge quick and dead. We believe also in one Holy Spirit. Amen. This is the Symbol or Creed of Cæsarea.

Hosius. — Do ye all accept and believe the articles of the Christian Faith as contained in the Creed of Cæsarea?

The Nicene Fathers. — I do.

[There is a brief pause during which Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia exchange pleased glances. Arius rubs his hands together in sign of satisfaction.]

Alexander. — My brethren, I ask permission to have the voice of the Egyptian Church heard through the mouth of Athanasius, mine own son in the faith. Let no man despise his youth, for he hath been an example to believers in word, in manner of life, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Moreover he hath given attendance to reading and hath not neglected the gift that is in him, as many of you do know who have read his treatise on the Incarnation.

Marcellus. — A most excellent work!

Arius (to Eusebius of Nicomedia). — Heard you ever such insolence, to push forward in this assembly his insignificant little deacon!

Eusebius of Nicomedia (to Arius). — Vex not thyself, Arius, he will not make a stir here as he hath done in his native city. Thou wilt soon silence him.

Hosius. — Athanasius, Archdeacon of Alexandria, thou art permitted to speak.

Athanasius. — I think myself happy, most noble Constantine and my reverend Fathers, that I am permitted to speak for the Church of Egypt, ~~for I myself am a Copt, an Egyptian of the Egyptians.~~ I was born in Alexandria, I have learned in her schools and have been nurtured in her Church, ~~and as a~~ child whose head is pillowed on his mother's breast hears her faithful heart beating with ~~love for him,~~ so have I listened throughout these troubled years at the heart of Egypt, and I know that its every beat is true to the Catholic Faith, so that when I speak for the Church of Alexandria, I speak for all apostolic churches that hold the faith once for all delivered to the saints. The Creed of Cæsarea, to which we have just given our assent, is in substance, and almost in form, the Creed we all learned when we were

baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Before this Arian madness assailed the Church, this Creed was sufficient for our reverent and adoring faith, for until these sad days no one who called himself a Christian has ever doubted the true godhead of Jesus Christ. But now this Creed is no longer explicit enough to express the true mind of the Church, since Arius and his followers can put a double meaning on what is so plain to us, since they can subscribe to the Creed, and yet hold a doctrine so utterly at variance with the faith of the Church.

The very fact that they say "yea, yea" when we put forth our Symbol shows that we have not expressed our faith with sufficient and incontrovertible plainness of meaning. Oh, we know Arius well in Alexandria, and even thou, Illustrious Emperour, hast written that when he looks most sweet and calm, he is most serpentine and obscure in his utterance.

My venerable Fathers, wherefore have we come together? To speak in uncertain tones?

To hang a mist of doubtful language before the truth, so that one shall say "I see this," and another "I see that"? Nay, we have come to dispel obscurity, first by declaring what it is that the Church has always believed and taught with regard to her Lord, and then by putting it into such language that for all time men shall know what is the Catholic Faith, and that none shall be able to say it is other than what it is.

Eustathius. — But I see not how language *could* be any plainer than what we have used. Doth not the Creed of Cæsarea say that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only begotten Son, begotten of the Father before all ages? Can human language say more than that?

Athanasius. — It would seem not, and yet the Arians
; have twisted even such a declaration till it no longer holds them to the confession that Jesus Christ is very and eternal God.

Eustathius. — How then shall we strengthen our Confession?

Athanasius. — There is only one word that we have as yet found that cannot be perverted to mean other or less than it says. (*He takes*

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from Alexander a letter.) In this letter written by the Bishop of Nicomedia to set forth the views of himself and Arius, he saith that they will not acknowledge that the Son is of *one substance* with the Father.

The Nicene Fathers. — Shame! Shame!

[Marcellus snatches the letter from the hand of Athanasius, tears it into pieces and throws it on the ground.]

Constantine. — I propose that into the Creed which hath always been held by the Catholic Church we insert the word “Homooousion” to confess that we believe the Son to be of one substance with the Father.

Nicene Fathers (rising). — Homooousion! Homooousion! Homooousion!

Athanasius (raising the banner of “Homooousion”). — The Church hath confessed her faith that the Son is of one substance with the Father, and we have erected a bulwark of the faith¹ against which the waves of heresy shall beat in vain.

Arius (springing to his feet excitedly). — Not so fast, thou pigmy, thou paltry mannikeñ of Alexandria. In Egypt I was persecuted by thee,

¹ The Nicene Creed “A bulwark of the Faith.”—Luther.

and expelled from the City because I agreed not with thy doctrine, but here in the presence of Augustus and of the Church, I will be heard, and this I say, that the Son, though begotten of God, hath not the same essence, power and glory with Him, but is altogether different in his nature. He is of different substance, Heterousion. (*He raises his banner.*)

The Nicene Fathers (excitedly). — No, no, down with it! Out with it!

Theophilus. — How excitable these Orientals are! See how they work themselves up into a frenzy.

Athanasius. — Ah, Theophilus, thou son of the chilly North, we are indeed filled with a frenzy and passion of holy fear, for we are contending for our all.

Eusebius of Nicomedia (suavely). — Arius, thou hast gone too far. We cannot accept thy Heterousion. (*In an undertone*) Thou hast misread the temper of this Council, thou shouldst never have spoken so plainly.

Arius (aside to Eusebius). — I fear not; when I have had my say they will come over to me. (*Raising his voice*) Most noble Constantine, seeing

thou art a lover of truth, and hast an open mind ready to welcome all new light and to march fearlessly where that light shall lead, and ye, my Fathers and Brothers, honoured and beloved, who are not held in bondage by tradition, nor to be affrighted by the cramping fears of narrow-minded men, I speak to you with all thankfulness for your intelligence and for the fair-mindedness with which I know that I shall be heard. I have been persecuted, accused of heresy, forbidden to teach in mine own pulpit, driven from Alexandria where I was listened to with deep respect and greatly loved, and why? Because I had the courage of my opinions, because I taught the truth as it seemed to me.

Paphnutius. — Arius, I was present at thine ordination, and I heard thee promise to teach the truth as the Church of Egypt hath received the same. In thy pulpit at Baukalis thou wast a minister of the Christian Church and a steward of the mysteries of God.

Potammon. — If thou desirest to teach a system of thine own, no one would hinder thee, as

long as thou dost not call it Catholic Christianity, and proclaim it from a pulpit of the Church.

Arius. — I pray this noble company to forgive the rude interruption of these Bishops of the outlying provinces.

Alexander. — Remember, Arius, the Bishops of the Thebaid and of Heraclopolis are Confessors of Christ, and they bear on their bodies scars that claim our reverence and love.

Arius (*shrugging his shoulders*). — I pray this honoured company of their clemency to hear me further. I find my “system” in Holy Scripture, for which I have as great a respect as any here, but what, I ask you, is the key-note of the Old Testament? Is it not this: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord?” I am a worshipper of one God, and therefore I say that there is a Trinity, but not all alike in majesty, for have ye not read the words of Christ himself, “My Father is greater than I?” And did not Peter in his Pentecostal sermon declare that “God hath *made* Jesus both

God and Lord?" Therefore, I say that the Son was the first of creatures, and in that sense the only begotten, created in order that by his means God might create us, but there was when he was not, and he is incapable of thoroughly knowing either the Father's nature or his own.

Athanasius (*sternly*). — Answer me one word, Arius, and then thou needst go no further, for we shall all understand thee. Thou hast said that the Son is incapable of thoroughly knowing either the Father's nature or His own because He is a creature, and there was when He was not,—can then this exalted creature change from good to evil?

Arius. — Yes, as the angels fell from good to evil, so might he.

[*Great excitement.*]

The Nicene Fathers (*with horror stopping their ears*). — Blasphemy! Blasphemy!

Alexander (*rending his robe*). — O Lord, rebuke us not in thine indignation!

Nicene Fathers. — Neither chasten us in thy heavy displeasure.

Alexander. — Kyrie Eleison!



"ARIUS, THOU HAST FILLED UP THE MEASURE OF THINE INIQUITY!"

Nicene Fathers. — Christe Eleison!

Athanasius. — Thou hast filled up the measure of thine iniquity, Arius, and hast changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man.

Hosius. — Let all things proceed decently and in order. I ask the Council what is their verdict and wish with respect to the banner of Arius.

Nicene Fathers. — Down with it, down with it, take it away!

Constantine. — Remove this impiety, lest the roof fall on us.

[*A Page takes the banner out of the Church.*]

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Let us remember, my dearly beloved brethren, that we are messengers of the Gospel of Peace, and that sharp contention and angry words do not become us. We all profess and call ourselves Christians; there surely must be some expression of our faith which is wide enough to include us all. It is certain that we cannot say that the Son is of different substance from the Father, but since the Homoousion is not acceptable to some of our brethren, should we not in charity abandon that word, which

is not found in Holy Scripture and which in times past has led to misunderstanding, and take a word to which we can all give assent. I propose that we insert in our Creed the word “Homoiousion” to declare that we believe the Son to be of like substance with the Father.

[*The banner of “Homoiousion” is raised.*]

Eusebius of Nicomedia.—The Bishop of Cæsarea hath spoken wisely and in the true interests of peace. I trust that no one here (*he looks savagely at Athanasius*) is so conceited and swollen with pride as to set his own opinion against that of a scholar of such profound learning and winning eloquence as Eusebius of Cæsarea. For my part, I am willing to accept the term “Homoiousion.” (*Aside to Arius*) Thou too must accept this term, for until we have gained the victory we must be careful to make the difference between ourselves and the Catholic Faith look as small as possible.

Arius (to Eusebius of Nicomedia).—Yes, yes, it is wisdom to accept it now. Of like substance, — the Son is like the Father, — so are all

men, created in His image. (*Aloud to the Council*) The term Homoiousion would not be my choice, and yet in the interests of peace and unity I am willing to accept it and to subscribe to the statement that the Son is of like substance with the Father.

Theonas. — How broad-minded is Arius!

Secundus. — What an example to us all!

Hosius. — My brethren, let us hear further of your mind in this matter.

Spyridion. — I do not see any grave objection to the term, and yet to my ear it giveth a somewhat uncertain sound, as if there were a little rift within the pipe. When on the hill-sides of Cyprus I call my sheep, I ever pipe a full, clear note that doth not wheeze, and when in my little Church by the Sea I gather the children about me to teach them the articles of our belief, I like to use words whose meaning is as crystal clear as the lapping waters that break on the yellow, pebbly beach. Still, I come from a quiet corner of the world, and if ye, my reverend and learned Fathers, feel that this word doth confess that Jesus Christ

is true God and eternal Life, I will not oppose myself.

James of Nisibis. — I, too, come from a quiet corner and from a hermit's cave, but it seems to me that the question before us hath a sharp edge which should cut through all uncertainty. And the edge is this: what does of *like* substance mean? We that dwell much in solitude and silence think more of facts than of words. The fact is that Jesus Christ is very God. It is for you who dwell together and deal in words to say whether "of like substance" truly expresses the fact. If ye say that it doth, then I am willing to accept it for myself and to teach it to my people.

Paul of Neo-Cæsarea. — I do not heartily like the term "Homoiousion" because it hath no fixed meaning, but can be made to slide to any point where our private opinion would have it, but still if the other . . .

Marcellus (fiercely). — Yes, and be sure that Arius *will* slide the meaning down till it suit his own evil thought, so that although we may confess that the Son is one with the Father,

yet they will still say that He is a creature, however high they may pretend to place Him. Thus under a specious mask of agreeing with us, will they veil their blasphemy, and continue to sow the seeds of idolatry and atheism.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Thou art too vehement, my good Brother. Be pleased to remember that in this Council we are seeking light, not heat.

Athanasius. — Yes, we are seeking light, for we are seeking Christ Who is the only light of this dark world, and we have His promise that seeking we shall find. But, look you, beloved, he that would find a star must put out his candle, and if we would find the bright and morning star, we must lay aside self-will and refuse to be blinded by those ingenious systems of philosophy, the fabrication of disbelieving minds. [Arius, thy doctrine had its source and origin within thyself, but the Catholic Religion came down from heaven and is the gift of God, for which one among us could have ascended into heaven to bring it down? If man could

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have found God for himself, then need not God have taken upon Him our flesh and suffered for our salvation. We cannot fly into the secrets of the Deity on the waxen wings of the understanding, for the ways of God are not as our ways and His thoughts are as high above our understanding as the heavens are higher than the earth. We *can* only know God as He hath revealed Himself to the Church in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord.

We have heard much in this Council about peace. The Bishop of Cæsarea has just reminded us that we are messengers of the Gospel of Peace, and our renowned Emperour has touchingly appealed to us for unity in the name of the Prince of Peace. Precious indeed is the name of Peace, O Eusebius,¹ beautiful the idea of Unity, O Constantine! But who knows not that the only true unity of the Churches, the only true peace of the gospel, is the unity in Christ? Peace

¹ Hilary: "Precious is the name of Peace; beautiful the idea of unity, but who knows not that the only true unity of the Churches, the only true peace of the Gospel, is the unity in Christ."

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and unity must be founded on truth, for truth alone unites, error hopelessly confuses and divides.¹ Therefore, it is *not* in the interests of peace to surrender one atom of the truth. We can win and preserve unity and peace for the Church only by keeping the Catholic Faith whole and undefiled. Christ and His Apostles left us not a system of logic nor a vain deceit, but the naked truth to guard, and we dare not in the name of peace barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards.² Let us, therefore, contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints, our love abounding more and more in knowledge, not to cry "Peace, peace" where there is no peace, but that we may prove the things that differ, so that we may be sincere and without offence unto the day of Christ. Seeing then, my friends, that we cannot by our

¹ Du Bose: "Truth alone unites; error only hopelessly confuses and divides."

² Lambeth Encyclical, 1908: "We dare not in the name of peace barter away those precious things of which we have been made stewards."

own searching find out God, as the pagan philosophers and certain in our own day have vainly essayed to do, but that we can only know God as He hath revealed Himself to the Church, let us turn first to the Church's written record, this Fountain of our Salvation (*laying his hand on the Gospels*).

Arius, thou too hast turned to the Scriptures; so did Satan who when he bent himself against the sinlessness of Christ, wrested what was written to his own undoing. We must come to the Scriptures with an open mind, ready to follow whithersoever they may lead. But thou hast ignored the purpose and tenor of Holy Writ, leaving those things which suited not thy doctrine and wresting others from their context and true meaning.

See, yonder, at the feet of the Emperour, is wrought into this building the figure of a fish. It is composed of many pieces of coloured stones. We could displace those stones, and rearranging them into another figure, form the image of a serpent or of a man or of anything we chose. So hast

thou, Arius, ravished from Holy Scripture precious gems that in their proper place reveal to us our Saviour, and used them to make for thine own purpose an image which is not He. Thou takest the words of our Lord, "My Father is greater than I," but thou ignorest that He also said, "I and the Father are one." But the Church, receiving every word of her Lord, teacheth that the Son is subordinate to the Father as touching His Sonship, but that He is equal to the Father as touching His Godhead. Again, thou dost wrest the words of St. Paul to mean that Christ is only the first of all creatures, whereas the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove to declare that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, which cannot mean anything else than that He received from the Father the essential nature of the Father.¹ He is indeed the beginning of the creation of God, not as being the first thing created,

¹ Du Bose: " . . . Sonship which the Church ascribes to him alone, and which cannot mean anything less than that he received from the Father the essential nature of the Father."

but because by Him all things were made and apart from Him was not anything made. We are not free to say we do not see, for the Godhead of Christ shineth out from every portion of the written word. He claimed for Himself the unspeakable name "I Am," whereat the wrathful Jews took up stones to stone Him. He accepted the worship of men. He was put to death because He claimed to be God.

And what the Church hath recorded in the Scriptures, she hath ever taught and practised from the day when Christ sent her forth to make disciples of all nations, placing His own name between that of the Father and of the Holy Ghost,¹ into which name we are all baptized.

I ask you, Bishops of the Church, who can trace your line back to the Apostles and who know what has been taught in your Sees for nearly three hundred years, since Christ ascended into heaven, has there been one day when He has not been worshipped as God by the Church?

¹ Edw. M. Jefferys: Sermon on Hebrews xiii, 10.

Nicene Fathers. — No, not one.

Athanasius. — Has He not reigned with absolute sovereignty over her life?

Nicene Fathers. — Yes, verily.

Athanasius. — Hath she not ever enthroned Him as very and eternal God?

Nicene Fathers. — Yes.

Athanasius. — The traditions of the Church no less than Holy Scripture prove that the Son is of one substance with the Father, and though this is a new term, yet is it the expression of an old belief, an old worship and an old devotion of soul.¹ Arius, thou makest thy boast that thou art a worshipper of one God. Art thou indeed ignorant that the Catholic Faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance? Thou hast indeed a Trinity of thine own imagining, one supreme and two subordinate beings, but there not only thy faith

¹ Wace: (quoted by Bright). "A new term, yet is it the expression of an old belief, an old worship, and an old habitual devotion of soul."

but thy boasted reasoning is at fault, for he that is less than God is not God,¹ therefore either admit that the Son is of one substance with the Father, or else cease to worship Him.

My brethren, Shepherds and Bishops of the Flock of Christ, once in the borders of Cæsarea Philippi our Lord asked His disciples this question, "Whom say ye that I am?" To-day our Lord comes again to His Church, still with the same question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Lift up your hearts! Look upon Him risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitting on the right hand of God! See the prints of the nails and the wounded side! Hear His voice speaking to you, "Whom say ye that I am?"

Nicene Fathers (rising and crying with enthusiasm). —
Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!

Athanasius. — Shall we say that He is of different substance from the Father?

Nicene Fathers. — No, no, God forbid!

¹ St. Augustine: "He that is less than God is not God."

Athanasius. — Shall we be content to say that He is
of like substance with the Father?

Nicene Fathers. — No, no!

Athanasius. — What shall we say?

Nicene Fathers. — He is of One substance with the
Father. Homousion!

Alexander. — Flesh and blood hath not revealed it
unto us, but our Father who is in heaven.

Constantine. — Arius, thou hast heard the voice of the
Church, wilt thou renounce thy heresy
and confess with us that Jesus Christ is
Very God of one substance with the Father?

Arius. — I have chosen my own way and I will abide in it.

Constantine. — Then art thou banished from our pres-
ence, and we decree that thy books shall be
burned, that the Church of God be not
poisoned by thy blasphemous doctrine.

Alexander. — Arius, thou art excluded from the Com-
munion of the Church of Egypt, for he
that believeth not is condemned already,
because he hath not believed in the name of
the only begotten Son of God.

Constantine. — Depart!

[*Arius bows low to the Emperour and starts to leave, but
turns again and addresses Eusebius of Nicomedia.*]

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Arius. — And thou, wilt thou subscribe to this Creed?

Eusebius of Nicomedia (aside to Arius). — I yield me
now and abide my time, but have no fear,
I shall gain the ear of the Emperour and
undo this day's work.

Arius (contemptuously). — Thou trimmer! Thou wilt
gain nothing by thy weakness; I shall see
thee too in exile.

[*He starts again to go, but stops before Athanasius.*]

Arius. — I will yet be thy destruction.

*Angel of Vision (standing before Athanasius with a
drawn sword, but invisible to the eye of flesh).*
— How shalt thou destroy whom God pro-
tects?

[*Exit Arius.*]

Alexander (looking after him sadly). — And he went
out, and it was night.

Hosius. — Thanks be to God Who hath given unto us
His servants grace by the confession of a
true faith to acknowledge the glory of the
eternal Trinity, and in the power of the
Divine Majesty to worship the Unity.

Constantine. — May He keep us steadfast in this faith,
and evermore defend us from all adversity.
Let us now finish our work by setting forth

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what shall be to all future ages known as
the Symbol of Nicæa.

[*A scribe takes his place at the table.*]

Hosius. — I believe in one God, the Father Almighty.

Eusebius of Cæsarea. — Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

Eustathius of Antioch. — And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only begotten Son of God.

Nicene Fathers. — And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the
only begotten Son of God.

Paul of Neo-Cæsarea. — Begotten of His Father before
all worlds.

Nicene Fathers. — Begotten of His Father before all
worlds.

Potammon of Heraclopolis. — God of God.

Nicene Fathers. — God of God.

Paphnutius of the Upper Thebaid. — Light of Light.

Nicene Fathers. — Light of Light.

Alexander. — Very God of Very God.

Nicene Fathers. — Very God of Very God.

Marcellus of Ancyra. — Begotten, *not* made.

Nicene Fathers. — Begotten, *not* made.

Athanasius. — Being of one substance with the Father.

Nicene Fathers. — Being of one substance with the
Father.

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[*As they say this, they raise their right hands to heaven.*]

James of Nisibis. — By whom all things were made.

Spyridion of Cyprus. — Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven.

Theophilus. — And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.

Constantine. — And was made man. O ineffable condescension!

[*He kneels, removing his crown.*]

Nicene Fathers (all kneeling). — And was made man.

[*After a pause they all rise.*]

Victor. — And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

Vincentius. — And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures.

Eustathius. — And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God.

John, Catholicos of the Church of the Farther East. — And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and dead.

Athanasius. — Whose kingdom shall have no end.

Alexander. — I believe in the Holy Ghost.

Hosius. — But those who say “there was once when he was not” or “before he was begotten he

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was not" or maintain that the Son of God is of different essence from the Father, these doth the Catholic Church anathematize.

Nicene Fathers. — Amen.

Hosius. — Let us now subscribe to this Creed by affixing our names thereto, in witness that to his Symbol we will be faithful until death.

[*The Nicene Fathers come up to sign their names, with the exception of Theonas and Secundus.*]

Constantine. — Theonas, Bishop of Marmarica, and Secundus, Bishop of Ptolomais, do ye not subscribe to the Catholic Symbol?

Theonas. — No, we abide with Arius.

Constantine. — Then with Arius go into exile.

[*Exeunt Theonas and Secundus.*]

Constantine (to Acesius, who is standing near him, waiting to sign the Creed). — Art thou a schismatic, Acesius?

Acesius. — My lord, I am a Novation, but a true Catholic.

Constantine. — Then thou wilt communicate with thy fellow Catholics?

Acesius. — Not so, my lord, for the discipline of the

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Church is too lax, and I will not countenance such softness and luxury.

Constantine (*impatiently*). — Then, Acesius, take a ladder and climb up into heaven by thyself.

[*When the Nicene Fathers have all signed, they resume their seats.*]

Constantine. — Give me joy, my friends, and dear brothers in the faith, for now is the desire of my heart fulfilled. We all believe in one God and worship in His name. The power of Satan has been thwarted and the splendour of the truth at God's command has vanquished the dissensions, schisms and tumults which have invaded the repose of the Church and Empire. Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy, joy cometh in the morning. The spectral cloud which has been hanging over the Church, threatening to burst and scatter us to the winds, is now dispersed by the Sun of Righteousness Who has penetrated our hearts with light and love and peace. I, therefore, as a happy ending to our Council, bid you all to a love feast at the palace

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to-morrow night. There, as round the table of a common Father, all wrongs may be forgiven, all bitter thoughts forgot.¹ There ye shall help me to celebrate, first the twentieth anniversary of mine accession to the Empire, and secondly, the Victory of Nicæa, the Victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith.

[*They all rise. The Emperour comes forward bearing the Labarum. He signs to Athanasius, who comes and stands at his side, holding the banner of Homoou-sion. They all sing.*]

Deum de Deo

Lumen de Lumine

Gestant puellae viscera

Deum verum

Genitum non factum

Venite adoremus Dominum. Amen.

[*Curtain*]

¹ "As round the table of our common Father
All wrongs forgiv'n, all bitter thoughts forgot."

— ELIZABETH M. JEFFERYS.

ACT III

Time — Thirty years after the Council.

Place — The Nitrian Desert.

Scene I — A place near the Nile. The afternoon of a day in June.

Scene II — The Chapel of the Palms in the Laura of St. Anthony. An hour before sunset.

Persons Represented

ATHANASIUS. { Bishop of Alexandria and Metropolitan
 { of All Egypt, called "The Pope."

A NILE BOATMAN.

DISCOURAGEMENT.

VISION.

ST. ANTHONY. { The Aged Hermit and Head of the
 { Community.

ISIDORE. }
AMMONIUS. } Monks.

ABRA. }
ANTHUSA. }
EUDÆMONIS. } Nuns.

OTHER MONKS AND NUNS.

Scene I. — [*The edge of the Nitrian Desert. A bend in the Nile is visible. Here and there in the foreground a palm. Mountains in the far distance. The Angel of Vision is seated under a palm.*]

The Angel of Vision (speaking thoughtfully). —

Forth from the gates of fair Jerusalem
Streams the glad throng, aquiver with sweet
hope,

Hastening to meet the King. Their eager hands
Now strip the graceful palms whose feathery
boughs

They wave in rhythmic exultation, while
Their glad hosannas rend the balmy air
In rich and many voiced harmony.

Five days have passed! Only five little days.
Again behold! The crowd now sways with
wrath

; And seething passion. Dark each face and
grim,

Hoarse every voice and dissonant with hate;
“Yes, crucify Him, on our heads the guilt,
But we will have Him crucified to-day.”
Only five little days have intervened.

[*The Angel rises and comes forward.*]

O Bride of Christ that in Nicæa’s Halls

ATHANASIUS

Confessed thy Lord with loving heart, and voice
So firm and clear, where are *thy* palms to-day?
Where are thy glad hosannas? Wilt thou too
Reject thy lover and thy Sovereign Lord?
Nay, thou afflicted one, thy heart is true;
By thy false children thou hast been betrayed.
Thine own they never were except in name,
For when through thy most hospitable doors
Passed Constantine, there followed in his wake
A crowd of worldlings and adventurers
Who little recked of thee or of thy Lord,
But hungered for the solid loaves which now
Prosperity hath brought thee. Better far
The rack of persecution, the scant fare
Of holy poverty than this new wealth
Which draws to thee the children of the world.
How should these lovers of the golden calf
Care for thy heavenly doctrine? Verily
The Arian demi-god is god enough
For those who will not rise above the earth.
So with the Arians these make common cause,
Sure that they hold the future of the world.
They seize thine altars, and in thy great name
A creed proclaim which thou hast never known.
The Emperour's ear they gained, and craftily

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Turned his untutored mind to their own will.
Then the honest, simple folk who seldom think
Followed in all good faith the golden court,
And so the world awoke one dreary day,
And groaned to find that it was Arian.
Hath Christ abandoned thee, O stricken Church?
Art thou to perish like an earth-born thing
Because an earth-born thing oppresseth thee?
See, on the bosom of the glassy Nile
Glideth this way a boat. Thy champion comes
Flying before his foes. Yet fear not thou
For him who fears not for himself. He hides
Only until this tyranny be spent.
With temper royal, but with spirit meek
Again will Athanasius fight for thee,
And yet again, until he wins in Christ
Th' eternal victory of heavenly truth.
O radiant spirit, faithful unto death,
After the mighty twelve chief instrument
To bring the world to Christ and to the light,¹
Come thou apart into this wilderness
And rest awhile. 'Tis Christ who biddeth thee.

¹ "A principal instrument, after the Apostles, by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world." — Newman.

ATHANASIUS

[Enter Athanasius and the Nile Boatman, who carries the wallet of Athanasius swung over his oar.

The Angel of Vision withdraws into the background and to one side.]

The Boatman. — Now from here I can show thee the place. Dost see yonder two palms?

Athanasius. — I cannot choose but see them. They stand like sentinels in the loneliness of the desert.

The Boatman. — Yes, there are no others near; there is a spring which gives them life. Now that is what we call “The Chapel of the Palms.” The cave of St. Anthony is hard by. Thou canst not miss it, besides thou art like to find some of the hermits praying at the Chapel, for they oft resort there at eventide.

Athanasius. — Then leave me now, good friend, and return to thy boat; but first accept this piece of silver from my slender purse, and with it a poor traveler’s thanks. [Tenders him the piece of silver.]

The Boatman (waving aside the silver). — I do not want silver, but I would crave thy blessing.

Athanasius (startled). — Doth he suspect? (To the

ATHANASIUS

Boatman) Dost thou indeed care for the blessing of such a poor wanderer as I?

The Boatman. — My lord, I was in Alexandria the glad day that Pope Athanasius came home from Rome, and I was hoarse for a month afterwards from shouting "Welcome." I humbly crave thy blessing.

[*He kneels and Athanasius makes over him the sign of the Cross. Then he rises again.*]

Athanasius. — Now thou hast my life in thy hands.

The Boatman. — I would to God it were alway as safe as it is with me. Have no fear of me, my lord. See! (*With a sudden movement he throws open his tunic, and the word "Homousion" is seen on his breast.*)

Athanasius. — Homousion! How dost thou understand this Symbol?

The Boatman. — Why, in truth, I cannot understand the subtlety of it, nor follow after learned reasoning, but this much I do know, that it is the watchword of the Catholic Church, and that it means that He Whom we worship is indeed Very God of Very God.

Athanasius. — Thou dost understand the one thing needful. God keep thee ever in the true faith.

ATHANASIUS

The Boatman (fastening his tunic again). — Once I found in the Nile the body of a man who had been drowned, and as I buried him and said a prayer over him, I thought, “Poor fellow! Who knowst whether thou wert Pagan or Christian, Arian or Catholic?” And when next I was in Alexandria I had a sailor fellow prick this watchword on my breast, that whether I be alive or dead, all men may know that I worship only Very God.

But now I will leave thee and return to the river, for there I can best watch to see whether thou art pursued. If there is suspicion of danger, I will blow one blast upon my horn, the sound of which carries five miles, but if all is safe when the evening star appears, I will blow three blasts and then thou mayst go to rest in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Fare thee well.

[*Exit the Boatman.*]

Athanasius. — I will rest awhile beneath this tree before I venture into that blazing strip between me and the Chapel of the Palms.



"GOD KEEP THEE EVER IN THE TRUE FAITH"

ATHANASIUS

[*He seats himself under the palm tree.*

Enter Discouragement. She is robed in black, and carries in her hand a veil.]

Discouragement. — Now is the hour of darkness when the powers of evil have large sway. Can I not throw over him my pall and make him distrust God? (*Vision appears.*) Art thou here, mine enemy?

Vision. — I am here at God's behest, and thou at Satan's.

Discouragement. — That being so I do defy thee! Hath discouragement never yet broken the wings of faith?

Athanasius. — How sweet was the simple faith of that poor boatman!

[*Discouragement steps forward and throws over the head of Athanasius her black veil.*]

Athanasius. — And yet 'tis sad to think I might so easily have fallen into the hands of one less friendly. A frail lamp am I to carry the Church's light. (*He sighs wearily.*)

Discouragement. — One little lamp against a world of darkness! Thou hast been over confident. If God had really called thee to defend the Faith, would he not have come mightily

to thine aid? When He called Joshua, the walls of Jericho crumbled to dust; when He called Moses, the Plagues of Egypt fought for him; when He called David from the sheep-cote, Goliath fell dead at his feet; but thou . . . what miracle helps thee?

Athanasius. — I am greatly oppressed. My soul cleaveth unto the dust!

Discouragement. — Thou wast too much elated at Nicæa. Have not events proved that the Church only triumphed because Constantine upheld it? How long did Constantine remain faithful? Was even Hosius faithful unto death? Did the Bishop of Imperial Rome stand firm?

Athanasius. — How are the mighty fallen!

Discouragement. — Thou art alone against the world, Athanasius. Constantius is thine implacable enemy. The infamous George holds thy See. He sits on the throne of St. Mark, and thou art in exile. The sheep of thy flock are oppressed and persecuted. Even in this desert may often be heard their hymns as they pass along loaded

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with chains to the remote and savage place of their destination. Many of them bear the scars and wounds and mutilations which have been inflicted upon them to force them to blaspheme.

Athanasius. — Alas my own dear flock! Alas! for that your shepherd cannot protect you from the wolves.

Discouragement. — The Arians have forsaken the covenant of Christ. They have thrown down his altar and slain his servants with the sword, and thou, only thou art left, and they seek thy life to destroy it.

Athanasius. — It is enough, O Lord, take away my life, for I have failed.

Discouragement. — Aha! See how low I have brought him! My victory is won.

Vision. — Lift up thine eyes, Athanasius, unto the hills from whence cometh thy help.

Athanasius (lifts his head and looks up). — My help cometh from the Lord who hath made heaven and earth. I must not lose heart, for to lose heart is to lose faith, and to lose faith is to lose all.

Vision. — Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel,

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all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

Athanasius. — Yes, that is true to-day. The mass of the Christian laity is still sound in the faith.¹ The great silent, solid body of Christian people stand firmly on the facts,² content that the mystery should be above their heads; for the ears of the people are holier than the hearts of the priests.³ (*He looks up at the tree by which he is resting.*) Ah! friendly palm, almost could I believe thou art a juniper! What is this black mist that smothers me? (*Tears the veil from his head.*) Away, away, ye black bats of doubt! (*beating the air with the veil.*) I have let you flap your wings too long. O Lord, in thee have I trusted, let me never be confounded!

[*Discouragement flies from the scene.*]

Vision. — Gloria in excelsis Deo! Now, Athanasius, lie down under thy juniper tree and sleep while I prepare refreshment for thee.

[*Athanasius lies down and sleeps; Vision walks to the opposite side of the stage and beckons.*]

¹ Farrar.

² Du Bose.

³ Hilary.

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Vision. — Come hither, my little ravens.

[*Enter Abra and Anthusa. They each carry
a bundle of rushes.*]

Anthusa. — There are no rushes here, Abra, not even
any stubble or drift from the river.

Abra. — Thou art right (*looking about her*). We have
very few rushes gathered, and no fuel. I
fear we shall be chidden. 'Tis my fault,
Anthusa, for I made thee come this way.

Anthusa. — Thou art in a strange mood to-day, Abra,
first thou wouldst not let me eat my dinner,
and then we must needs come this new and
uncertain way.

Abra. — Yes, some power outside of myself has com-
pelled me all day. I had the feeling that
we might find some hungry traveler, and
so I persuaded thee to save our dinner.
; 'Twould be passing sweet to feed a hungry
traveler, would it not? And then I have
had all day the feeling that we should find
something of value by traveling to the
South.

Anthusa. — Well, we're not like to . . . (*Sees Athan-
asius.*) Look, Abra, there is a traveler
sleeping under that tree.

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Abra. — Why! so it is. Oh! Anthusa, haply he is our hungry traveler! Let us creep up and lay our cruse of water and our bread and dates where he will see them when he wakes.

[*They do as she says, and then retire and wait.*]

Vision (*touches Athanasius on the shoulder*). — Arise and eat.

Athanasius (*sits up and sees the food*). — Is this indeed the juniper tree? (*Sees the little maids.*) Ah! these are the ministering spirits who have brought me food.

Abra. — Yes, good Traveler, pray thee, eat and drink.

Athanasius. — And so I will with grateful heart; but draw near and tell me who you are and how you found me here.

Abra. — We are virgins from the Laura of St. Anthony, and we have been gathering rushes for our mat-weaving.

Anthusa. — We kept our dinner because this dear Abra thought we might meet a hungry traveler.

Athanasius. — And so you did, but will ye not draw near and share with me this food, there is abundance for all.

Abra. — Not so, we are not hungry, besides, it is too near sundown when our fast begins.

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Athanasius. — A fast to-morrow! The day is not in our Calendar. Is it a special fast?

Abra. — Yes, we have a fast to pray for our blessed Pope.

Athanasius. — To pray for Pope Athanasius?

Abra. — Yes, hast thou not heard? He is again in exile, flying from the fierceness of his enemies.

Athanasius. — Truly the Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me.

Abra (to Anthusa). — Thou seest he is a godly man. Art thou not glad he hath our dinner?
(*To Athanasius*) But, good Sir, hast thou ever been in Alexandria?

Athanasius. — Yes, I have traveled far and wide, and I have been in Alexandria.

Abra. — Perchance thou hast been in Alexandria when Athanasius was there?

Athanasius. — Yes, when I was in Alexandria, Athanasius was there.

Anthusa (with excitement). — Then thou hast seen him?

Athanasius. — The time I best saw his face was not in Alexandria, but in traveling through a wood. I came to a crystal pool, deep and still, and when I stooped over it to quench my thirst, I clearly beheld Athanasius.

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Anthusa. — How, was he in the water?

Abra. — Hush, Anthusa, rise up quickly, this is the Pope.

[They make him a low reverence, then kneel to receive his blessing.]

Athanasius. — And now, my little maids, lead on, I would like to reach the Chapel of the Palms in time for prayers.

[Abra picks up the wallet, and they all go off the stage.]

Curtain.

Scene II. — *[The Chapel of the Palms. Two tall palms near together. Between them a rude altar. The spring is indicated by a ledge of stone on which rests a shell. Grass and a few shrubs about the spring. In the far distance the Nitrian Mountains and the silver thread of the Nile.]*

Voices behind the scenes chant the De Profundis. Enter the monks and nuns still singing. At the end of the procession, St. Anthony, supported by two monks. Following these, two other monks carry his chair and his sheepskin robe. They put the chair in place, spread over it the sheepskin, and St. Anthony is seated. He leans back very much exhausted.]

ATHANASIUS

Isidore. — Bring water.

*[One of the nuns brings water from the spring
in a shell, another fans him.]*

Isidore. — He should not have tried to walk.

Ammonius. — No, he grows weaker every day; we
shall not long have him with us.

*[St. Anthony sits up and speaks, at first weakly, and
with short breath, gradually he recovers, and talks
more easily.]*

St. Anthony. — My children, my own dear children,
last night a beautiful angel of death stood
by my bed. I joyfully held out my weak
arms, but he shook his head: "Not yet,
Anthony, not yet; soon I will come for
thy soul, but thou hast one thing more to
do on earth for thy brethren." So when I
awoke this morning, I knew what I had yet
to do. I have had word from Alexandria.
Alas! Alas! The city is given up to the
fury of the Arians. Once more the faith-
ful are in sore tribulation. On the Sunday
after Pentecost there was another massacre.
Church virgins and matrons were scourged
to death to make them blasphemers. Sixteen
bishops have been driven from their sees.

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The clergy are not allowed to visit the sick, nor to baptize.

Ye know that since February Athanasius hath been in hiding near the city that he might in secret still minister to his flock. But now in the fierce search for him the houses of Christians are sacked, even the very tombs are desecrated, and so he is compelled to fly into the desert, but no one knows just where he is. Oh my poor Archbishop! Oh my poor faithful brethren!

Ammonius. — What can we do for them here in the wilderness!

St. Anthony. — My children, have we not learned to pray? Why else have we passed long years on the edge of this vast wilderness? What other meaning have our vigils under the quiet stars? I have called you together, perhaps for the last time, that we may with tears and fasting supplicate God for the persecuted Church of Alexandria, and for the hunted exile, our best beloved bishop, our own sweet Athanasius.

Isidore. — Our hearts overflow with love and com-

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passion, lead thou us on and up to the throne of God.

[*Abra rushes in excitedly.*]

Abra. — Tidings! Tidings! Oh, such tidings have I!

Ammonius. — Thou must indeed have tidings of importance to break thus into our worship.

St. Anthony. — Tell, little Abra, what tidings hast thou brought?

Abra. — He is here.

The Monks and Nuns (excitedly). — Who? Not the Bishop!

Abra. — Yes, Athanasius, our own blessed Pope. He comes with Anthusa. See, this is his wallet.

St. Anthony. — Help me to my feet.

[*Enter Athanasius and Anthusa. Athanasius hastens to Anthony and takes him in his arms. Anthony sinks down again upon his seat.*]

Athanasius. — Art thou ill, my Father?

St. Anthony. — With thee at hand? No, Athanasius, but I am very old, one hundred and five years old, my son.

[*Athanasius turns and sees the others, takes Ammonius and Isidore by the hand.*]

Athanasius. — Are ye then here, Isidore and Ammonius,

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to share my exile as ye did in Rome? And thou, Eudæmonis, I heard that thou hadst fled, but I thought that thou wast in Tabenne.

[He takes the hand of one after the other. They all greet him with warmth. Some take up the hem of his robe and kiss it, others kiss his hand.]

St. Anthony. — Come hither, Athanasius, these have many days in which to see thee; haply I have but this one.

[Athanasius seats himself at the feet of Anthony, holding his hand. The monks and nuns group themselves around, some sitting on the ground, others standing.]

St. Anthony (regarding Athanasius with great tenderness and delight). — Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace! O, my son, thou hast made glad the wilderness and the solitary place. Thou hast made the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose!

Athanasius. — It is sweet to see thy face again after many days.

St. Anthony. — Here is the sheepskin coat thou gavest me. (*Shows the edge of it.*) Thou art to have it again when I am gone. Thou shalt soon have it, Athanasius.

Athanasius. — In these troublous times one could easily envy thee that thy pilgrimage is so nearly finished. To depart and be with Christ! The very thought brings rest and peace.

St. Anthony. — Yes, I am putting off my armour, and thou art still in the hottest of the fray. But now we have a quiet hour, so tell me all that I have longed to know. I have watched from afar the long tragedy of thy life since thou wast raised to the throne of St. Mark. Tell us now more of these things, for well I know that we shall hear nothing which does not become a wise man to do and a righteous to suffer.¹ Wast thou with Bishop Alexander when he died?

Athanasius. — Alas! no. I was absent from Alexandria on an errand of his own, and not, as has been said, in hiding to evade the bishopric, for I never either shunned or sought it. It came to me by the suffrage of the whole people, and I was consecrated

¹“Only in Athanasius there was nothing observed, throughout the course of that long tragedy, other than such as very well became a wise man to do and a righteous to suffer.” — Hooker: Eccl. Pol. (quoted by Bright).

in a manner both apostolic and spiritual. Those first years of mine episcopate were peaceful and quiet. God gave them to me that I might edify the Church and carry the good news of God to those who dwell in darkness. Thou hast heard how Frumentius kindled in Ethiopia the splendour of the light of Christ?

St. Anthony. — Yes, the field of Ethiopia was white to harvest, and thine Apostle gathered in a goodly sheaf.

Athanasius. — Those were my halcyon days!

St. Anthony. — When the Sun of Righteousness bringeth calm to this stormy sea, thy halcyon will return.

Athanasius (assents with a smile). — Then the clouds began to gather. Eusebius of Nicomedia led the onslaught and hatched out each baneful plot.¹ I will not weary you with the accusations and calumnies wherewith the Atheists sought to compass my ruin, nor with the infamies of the Council of Tyre.

¹ It seems best still to speak of him as Eusebius of Nicomedia, though he was dead at this time and had been Bishop of Constantinople before he died.

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Ammonius. — We have heard how Ischyrras confessed his perjuries against thee.

Isidore. — Yes, and we heard how thou didst show them Arsenias alive and possessed of his two hands.

Athanasius (smiling). — I had him wrapped in a mantle until they had proved that I had killed him; then at my bidding he held out first his right hand, and then his left. "Where grew the hand that I cut off to use for magic?" I asked them. "God hath created men with two hands only." Still they condemned me, and so I took shipping and came to Constantinople, and there acquitted myself of all their charges before the Emperour. Then Satan himself came to help their cunning with his own. They trumped up the charge that I had threatened to hold back the corn ships on which New Rome depends for her supply, so Constantine, harried and impatient of all the turmoil, cut the knot and banished me to Treves.

Ammonius. — Alas, that is a barbarous place, is it not?

Athanasius (smiling). — If so, good Ammonius, the

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barbarous people showed me no little kindness. But in truth, Treves is a stately city, on the banks of the Moselle in whose gently gliding waters her beautiful buildings are mirrored in dreamlike loveliness. The Romans have made it a safe and pleasant place to live. In Maximin, the Bishop, I found a faithful friend and beloved companion. I had leisure to rest and meditate, and I was allowed to write to my friends in Alexandria (*with a smile*), though, 'tis true, my letters were sometimes intercepted. Another companion I had there, and thou wouldst remember him, Isidore, he was a comrade of our boyish days, Cornelius.

Isidore. — Cornelius! Is't indeed so? I have not heard of him for many years.

Athanasius. — He commands a legion, and hath his quarters in the Porta Martis, the city gate that is more like a vast fortress than a gate. Here I often visited him. He is a brave Roman and a loyal soldier of Christ. When we first met he said, "Tell me, Athanasius, if thou canst, what is all this trouble about? Every tongue seems to

prate of some formula that I cannot understand. What have these hard, unintelligible words to do with the religion of Christ which we learned together from Bishop Alexander, in the dear seaside room of the Patriarcheion?

St. Anthony. — So has it seemed to many simple souls who have not discerned the subtle heresy, and who do not see the region of outer darkness to which it leads. What didst thou answer him, Athanasius?

Athanasius. — Cornelius, I said, let me ask of thee one question: What thinkest thou of Christ, whose Son is He? And he drew himself up to his full, splendid height and said, "He is the Son of the living God, and He is my Saviour, and my Lord and my God." Then I said, "That is all there is to understand, Cornelius, the question is one of simple loyalty to Christ as God." So then he heaved a great sigh of relief and said, "Why, loyalty is an easy thing, it is the business of a soldier's life, and loyalty to Christ as God shall be henceforth the business of my life.

St. Anthony. — Happy he who is mute when men discuss thy generation, but ringing as a trumpet when they adore it! Happy they who know how difficult it is to understand, how sweet to praise Thee!¹ (*After a pause*) We received here in the desert thy festal epistle from Treves, and we kept the feast of the resurrection with thee in spirit, being greatly cheered and strengthened by thy words of courage, and by the joyousness of thine unconquerable hope. Then we heard that Constantine had died at Pentecost, and then that his eldest son befriended thee and secured from his brothers their consent to thy return.

Athanasius. — Yes, and how sweet was the welcome of my dear flock; how comforting the love of my faithful clergy! The days that followed were like an oasis in the sandy wastes of my long exiles.

Ammonius (*mournfully*). — Thou wast not long in the oasis, dear Father, for when the second Constantine was killed, Constantius no longer concealed his implacable enmity.

¹ Eaphraem Syrus (quoted by Farrar).

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Thou wast soon banished again, and we went with thee.

Athanasius. — Yes, but we were not saddened by temporal adversity, nor frightened because the world is at enmity with God. Our Lord and Saviour had worse to bear. Let no one doubt but that in the end we shall be victorious, for we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. There were pleasant times in Rome, Ammonius, even for us poor exiles. How gracious was the kindness of Julius, the good Pope of the West. How grand and beautiful was the great city itself whose buildings are "the stone pages of its own history."

Isidore (slyly). — Ammonius would not look at any
; of the buildings of the seven-hilled city, except the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul.

Ammonius. — No, they interested me not. What have we to do with the things of this world? But this is where I see the finger of God in our exile to Rome. I believe that the Church of the West will always be stronger

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in the Faith and more firmly orthodox because of the sojourn there of our great Bishop.

Isidore. — Yes, and through our visit their interest in the monastic life was first aroused.

Athanasius. — God be praised if we have been permitted to help the Church of the West, but I do not forget where I was helped and strengthened by our brethren in Rome.

Ammonius. — Dear Father, how could anyone, especially a Roman, add ought to thee? Art thou not the head of the world?¹

Athanasius. — I learned very much by observing their calm and practical turn of mind, and contrasting it with our philosophic subtlety and logical acuteness. They would not easily be led into fantastic speculations and novel theories.²

Ammonius (*gloomily*). — Liberius, the Bishop of Rome, apostatized, and Hosius of Cordova signed an Arian Creed.

Athanasius. — The crime rests not with those who were

¹ The head of the Alexandrian Church was, according to St. Greg. Naz., "The head of the world."

² For the results of the visit of Athanasius to Rome, see R. Wheler Bush: St. Athanasius.

terrified, but with those who slowly tortured them into guilty acquiescence. The head of Hosius was white with the snows of an hundred winters when he signed the Sirmian Blasphemy. Anathema to thee, O Arian perfidy!

The Monks and Nuns. — Anathema!

St. Anthony. — Let us leave these thoughts of sadness, and talk of the day when Pope Athanasius came home.

Eudæmonis. — I was in Alexandria, and saw that day of gladness.

St. Anthony. — Then show it now to us, Eudæmonis.

Eudæmonis. — The exulting Church and people went forth to meet him in such vast multitudes that it was like another Nile.¹ Each trade and profession marched in its own place. Branches of trees were waved on high, rich carpets were spread for the beloved feet. Every inch of rising ground was covered by crowds anxious to catch sight of his face. The air was rent with plaudits and shouts of welcome. What banquets were spread for him! What clouds of

¹Greg. Naz.: Panegyric.

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sweet incense filled the streets! What illuminations turned night into day!

Athanasius. — Nine years had passed since the poor wandering Bishop had seen his flock. Dear, faithful flock who had stood firm through all calamities and cruelties with which the malice of the persecutors had afflicted them.

Eudæmonis. — And how good was our Bishop towards his opponents! How earnestly he strove to unite everyone in the bonds of peace and of mutual affection! What happy days for the Church! The hungry and orphans were sheltered and maintained. Each family and house seemed to become a church for the love of holiness of their members and their prayers towards God. Thrice happy the people who have such a teacher and pastor to lead them in the way.

Athanasius. — Nay, Eudæmonis, if thou wilt laud me to my face, I must needs tell how at the risk of thy life thou didst save thy Bishop on the night when Syrianus and his five thousand soldiers burst upon us all while we were at our vigil in the Church of St. Theonas.

ATHANASIUS

Eudæmonis. — That was a fearful night. In the lamplight we saw the flash of arms, while the church filled with the shouting soldiery. Many were wounded by arrows and trampled to death. The virgins huddled together in agonies of fright, but the Archbishop sat calmly on his throne and recited with his clergy a psalm of praise.¹

Athanasius. — But as soon as my people had escaped from the church, I yielded to my clergy and they hurried me out into the winter night. 'Twas then, Eudæmonis, that thou didst hide me in thy chamber and bring me food until I could escape out of the city.

Eudæmonis. — Thank God that thou art here and in safety!

Isidore. — Yes, thou art safe, my Bishop, among the monks and hermits. Thou hast countless friends who would give their lives for thee. No foot of Arian bishop can follow thee to the Nitrian Mountains. No Manichean duke can find thee in this wilderness of cells. From laura to laura and from hermitage to hermitage we can convey

¹ Farrar.

ATHANASIUS

thee secretly and swiftly. A boat on the Nile or a mule on the desert sand leaves no track.¹

Ammonius. — And from the Egyptian Desert thou canst govern and care for thy flock. Isidore and I will bear thy messages to Alexandria and throughout the Patriarchate.

Athanasius. — Ye are right, dear friends, I will abide with you until this tyranny be overpast. I will be one of you, wear your habit, share your fasts and vigils and your prayers, and I will employ such leisure as I have in writing for the defence of the Faith.

[*The sound of a horn is heard, three blasts.*

Isidore and Ammonius start to their feet.]

Athanasius. — Fear not, that is a signal of safety. My boatman promised that when the evening star appeared, if all were quiet on the Nile, he would blow three times that we might go to our rest in the name of the Blessed Trinity. See, there is the evening star, we must linger no more if we would come to our Eucharist in the morning with spirits joyful and refreshed.

¹ Farrar.

ATHANASIUS

St. Anthony. — And if Anthony, the aged, be not with you for that sweet feast, know that he prays for you in Paradise.

Athanasius. — Whether here or there, we are all one in Christ forever more. And now, before we separate for the night, shall we not lift our hearts in praise to Him Whom having not seen, we love?

*They all sing "A Hymn to Christ as God."*¹

Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ,
Thou of the Father the everlasting Son.

When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven
Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven
To all who believe.

Amen.

; [Curtain.]

¹ For the interesting suggestion that the *Rex gloriae Christe* was the core around which the *Te Deum* grew up into what it is, and that it may have been the identical "Hymn to Christ as God" of Pliny's Christians, see Dr. Huntington's Lecture on the *Te Deum* in *Lauda Sion*. (Church Club Lectures for 1896).



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